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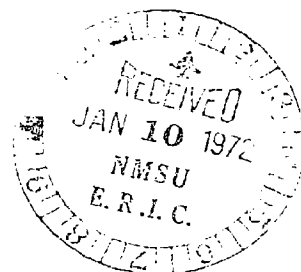
ABSTRACT

"The basic finding of this report is that minority students in the Southwest--Mexican Americans, blacks, American Indians--do not obtain the benefits of public education at a rate equal to that of their Anglo classmates. This is true regardless of the measure of school achievement used." The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights has sought to evaluate school achievement by reference to 5 standard measures: school holding power, reading achievement, grade repetitions, overageness for grade assignment, and participation in extracurricular activities. Without exception, minority students achieve at a lower rate than Anglos: their school holding power is lower; their reading achievement is poorer; their repetition of grades is more frequent; their overageness is more prevalent; they participate in extracurricular activities to a lesser degree. In addition to an analysis of these findings, the document contains 4 tables, 12 figures, and appendixes containing a superintendents' questionnaire, a principals' questionnaire, a discussion on methodology used to estimate holding power, 7 selected tables from other sources, findings of related studies on achievement, and 6 reading levels tables (by school ethnic composition and by state). A related document is ED 052 849. (MJB)

THE UNFINISHED EDUCATION

Outcomes for Minorities in the Five Southwestern States

October 1971



Mexican American Educational Series Report II

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A report of
the United States
Commission
on Civil Rights

U.S. Commission on Civil Rights

The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights is a temporary, independent, bipartisan agency established by Congress in 1957 and directed to: Investigate complaints alleging that citizens are being deprived of their right to vote by reason of their race, color, religion, or national origin, or by reason of fraudulent practices;

Study and collect information concerning legal developments constituting a denial of equal protection of the laws under the Constitution;

Appraise Federal laws and policies with respect to equal protection of the laws;

Serve as a national clearinghouse for information in respect to denials of equal protection of the laws; and

Submit reports, findings, and recommendations to the President and the Congress.

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LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

THE U.S. COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS
Washington, D.C. September 1971
November
December

THE PRESIDENT
THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE
THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Sirs:

The Commission on Civil Rights presents this report to you pursuant to Public Law 85-315, as amended.

In this second in its series of reports investigating the nature and scope of educational opportunities for Mexican Americans in the public schools of the States of Arizona, California, Colorado, New Mexico, and Texas, attention is focused on the performance of the schools as reflected in the achievements of their pupils.

From information gathered primarily through a survey of superintendents and principals in school districts having enrollments at least 10 percent Spanish Surnamed, the Commission has found that minority students in the Southwest do not obtain the same benefits of public education as their Anglo peers. Although the study is principally concerned with Mexican Americans, the same deprivations are noted for black and American Indian students in the Southwest.

The Commission's research found the schools wanting, as measured by five tests of student performance: an inability to hold many minority students through 12 years of schooling; consistently low reading achievement which thwarts success in other academic disciplines; extensive classroom failure which necessitates grade repetition; resultant overage-ness who has been left behind; and lack of student participation in extracurricular activities.

In each of these areas, minority group students show appreciably poorer records than Anglo students. They are the potential dropouts, the semi-literate, the unqualified who, if unable to become an affirmative part of our society, may become a burden to it. An educational system that is inadequate for the minority child is a costly system for our country.

We urge your consideration of the facts presented and hope for corrective action in the spirit expressed by the President when he declared: "Nothing is more vital to the future of our Nation than the education of its children; and at the heart of equal opportunity is equal educational opportunity. . . ."

Respectfully yours,

Rev. Theodore M. Hesburgh, C.S.C., *Chairman*
Stephen Horn, *Vice Chairman*

Frankie M. Freeman

Maurice B. Mitchell

Robert S. Rankin

Manuel Ruiz, Jr.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Letter of Transmittal	III
Acknowledgments	3
Preface	5
Introduction	7
I. SCHOOL HOLDING POWER	8
A. Southwest	9
B. Arizona	12
C. California	12
D. Colorado	14
E. New Mexico	14
F. Texas	17
II. POST-HIGH SCHOOL EXPERIENCES	21
III. READING ACHIEVEMENT	23
A. Southwest	24
B. Arizona	26
C. California	26
D. Colorado	28
E. New Mexico	28
F. Texas	31
G. Inter-State Comparisons on Selected Items	34
IV. GRADE REPETITIONS AND OVERAGENESS	37
V. PARTICIPATION IN EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES	39
VI. SUMMARY	41
Appendices	44

INDEX OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	Page
Figure 1. Estimates of School Holding Power for Each Ethnic Group: The Southwest	11
Figure 2. Estimates of School Holding Power for Each Ethnic Group: Arizona	13
Figure 3. Estimates of School Holding Power for Each Ethnic Group: California	15
Figure 4. Estimates of School Holding Power for Each Ethnic Group: Colorado	16
Figure 5. Estimates of School Holding Power for Each Ethnic Group: New Mexico	18
Figure 6. Estimates of School Holding Power for Each Ethnic Group: Texas	19
Table 1. Post-Graduation Outcomes for Each Ethnic Group	22
Figure 7. Estimates of Reading Levels for Each Ethnic Group: The Southwest	25
Figure 8. Estimates of Reading Levels for Each Ethnic Group: Arizona	27
Figure 9. Estimates of Reading Levels for Each Ethnic Group: California	29
Figure 10. Estimates of Reading Levels for Each Ethnic Group: Colorado	30
Figure 11. Estimates of Reading Levels for Each Ethnic Group: New Mexico	32
Figure 12. Estimates of Reading Levels for Each Ethnic Group: Texas	33
Table 2. Estimates of Students Repeating Grade	35
Table 3. Severe Overage	37
Table 4. Estimates of Participation in Seven Extra-curricular Activities by Ethnic Group	41

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The Advisory Committee has been of great assistance in providing guidance in the planning and execution of the Study. Sole responsibility for the views expressed and accuracy of the material contained in this and subsequent reports, however, rests with the Commission.

In addition, numerous educators from all parts of the country, many of whom are leaders in the Mexican American community, provided assistance in the development and review of the study design and survey questionnaires. State superintendents of education in all five Southwestern States and executive directors of school administrators' associations in several of the States encouraged full cooperation of superintendents and principals through formal letters and newsletters.

The report was prepared under the overall supervision of Martin E. Sloane, Assistant Staff Director, Office of Civil Rights Program and Policy.

Preface

This report is the second in a series on Mexican American* education in the Southwest by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights.

The series of reports seeks to provide a comprehensive assessment of the nature and extent of educational opportunities available to Mexican Americans in the public schools of the five Southwestern States and to make educators aware of the effects of their policies and programs on the performance of students of individual ethnic groups.

This report concentrates on the performance of schools as reflected in the achievement of their pupils. Five measures of achievement are examined: school holding power, reading achievement, overageness for grade assignment, grade repetition, and participation in extracurricular activities.

Sources of Information

The information for the entire series is drawn from several sources. The principal sources are the Commission's Spring 1969 Survey of Mexican American education in the five Southwestern States of Arizona, California, Colorado, New Mexico, and Texas and the Commission's tabulation of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare's (HEW) Fall 1968 racial and ethnic education survey.

The Commission survey encompasses only those school districts which had Mexican American enrollments of 10 percent or more in their student bodies.¹ Two survey instruments were used. A Superintendents' Questionnaire was sent to 538 districts which contained such enrollments. A total of 532, or 99 percent, of these questionnaires was completed and returned to the Commission.² These forms sought information from school

district offices on student enrollment by selected grades and ethnicity. Information was collected on district personnel and board of education members, use of consultants and advisory committees on Mexican American educational problems, and availability of, and participation in, in-service training.³

A second questionnaire was mailed to 1,166 principals in elementary and secondary schools within the sampled districts. The sample of schools was stratified according to the Mexican American proportion in the school's enrollment.⁴ Questionnaires mailed to individual schools requested information on such topics as staffing patterns, condition of facilities, ability grouping and tracking practices, and student and community participation in school affairs.

This questionnaire also sought information to evaluate the school experiences of students of various ethnic backgrounds. Data were obtained on four measures of school achievement: reading achievement, grade repetitions, grade overageness, and participation in extracurricular activities. This questionnaire represents the principal source of factual information on which this report is based. Approximately 95 percent of the schools returned questionnaires.⁵⁻⁶

A third source of information for the series of reports is drawn from classroom observations and onsite interviews of educators by Commission staff in schools in California, New Mexico, and Texas during the 1970-71 school year.

Another important source was testimony concerning education problems of Chicanos given at the public hearing held by the Commission in San Antonio in December 1968.

* In this report, the term Mexican American refers to persons who were born in Mexico and now hold United States citizenship or whose parents or more remote ancestors immigrated to the United States from Mexico. It also refers to persons who trace their lineage to Hispanic or Indo-Hispanic forebears who resided within Spanish or Mexican territory that is now part of the Southwestern United States.

As this report deals only with the Southwest, the terms Mexican American and Spanish Surnamed are used interchangeably. According to a Commission estimate from the 1960 census, more than 95 percent of all persons having Spanish Surnames in the States of Arizona, California, Colorado, New Mexico, and Texas are Mexican American under the above definition.

¹ Thirty-five districts with 10 percent or more Spanish Surnamed enrollment had not responded to HEW and thus were not included in the Commission Survey. The majority of these districts was in California.

² This includes a 100 percent response from districts in Arizona.

³ The Superintendents' Questionnaire appears as Appendix A.

⁴ Schools were grouped 0-24.9, 25-49.9, 50-74.9, and 75-100 percent Mexican American.

⁵ The Principals' Questionnaire appears as Appendix B.

⁶ A detailed description of the methodology used in the Mexican American Education Study can be obtained from the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, Washington, D.C. 20425.

However, this report on student outcomes relies primarily on the Principals' and the Superintendents' Questionnaires for its data. The Appendices were developed from various sources.

The first report in this series, entitled *Ethnic Isolation of Mexican Americans in the Public Schools of the Southwest*, examined the size and distribution of the Mexican American student enrollment; educational staff and school board membership; the scope of isolation of Mexican American students; and the extent to which they

participate in the educational capacities as teachers, principals, and school board members.

Forthcoming reports will examine the educational system in relation to the ethnic and cultural background of the Mexican American student; classroom interaction; finances and facilities; the relationship of social and economic conditions to academic achievement; and other crucial aspects of the education of Mexican American students in the Southwest.



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Introduction

A variety of factors influence a child's development and determine whether he will become a productive member of society and realize the full potential of his abilities. Of these, the experience a child has in school is among the most important. For minority group children, the experience afforded them by the schools often is of critical importance in shaping the future course of their lives. For these children, the schools represent the opportunity to intervene in the cycle of failure and rejection which is so often their fate.¹ In order to fulfill such a function the schools must first enable the minority children to succeed in the school environment.

The Commission sought to examine the degree to which schools in the Southwest are succeeding in educating their students, particularly minority students. This report focuses on five measures of school-controlled educational outcomes: school holding power, reading skills, grade repetition, overageness, and participation in extracurricular activities.

School holding power indicates the quantity of schooling a child receives. In this report it is measured by the percentage of students entering school who continue on at each successive grade. In general, the greater number of years of education a student obtains, the more likely he will be able to realize his potential abilities.

The second measure, reading ability, is a traditional criterion of academic achievement. The ability to read well is basic to success in almost every aspect of school curriculum. It is a pre-

requisite skill for nearly all jobs and is an important tool of lifelong learning.

Grade repetition is a third measure of educational outcomes. If children are required to repeat grades, they cannot acquire the same knowledge or skills as their schoolmates who progress at the normal rate.

Overageness of a child in relation to his grade level is closely tied to grade repetition. Although there are a variety of other reasons why a child may be overage for his grade assignment—e.g., late school entry, extended illness, temporary withdrawal from school for financial reasons—it is often the result of his having to repeat grades.

The fifth measure of educational outcomes is participation in extracurricular activities. The extent to which students participate in extracurricular activities is an indicator both of student involvement in school affairs and of the opportunities provided by the school for the development of leadership qualities and other social skills.

The educational outcomes of minority children are key indicators of whether the schools are succeeding or failing. They are the acid test of how well the schools are affording equal educational opportunity. The following report documents vast discrepancies in these outcomes for students of different ethnic groups.

¹ For a discussion of the greater importance of school factors to the achievement of minority children than to white Anglo children, see James S. Coleman, *et al.*, *Equality of Educational Opportunity*, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Office of Education, 1966, p. 22.

I. School Holding Power

A basic measure of a school system's effectiveness is its ability to hold its students until they have completed the full course of study. In one sense, this is *the* single most important measure, for if a student has left school permanently, all efforts to enrich the quality of education are valueless to him.

While many agree that a high school diploma should not be a prerequisite for certain jobs, the hard fact is that many employment opportunities are closed to those without that diploma. This is especially true of skilled jobs which offer the greatest potential for growth, promotions, and security. Thus, the failure to acquire a high school diploma denies to many the entrance requirements for positions which will lead to successful vocations.

A corollary measure of the effectiveness of the educational system which is related to school holding power, is the extent to which high school graduates go on to a 2- or 4-year college program. Today, the college degree represents an augmented expression of the high school diploma. Increasingly, employers are demanding the college degree, whether or not it is really essential to the position. In short, it is another fact of American life that a college degree, in great measure, increases the probability of vocational permanence, economic sufficiency, and increased opportunity for advancement and personal growth.⁸ To the extent, then, that the primary and secondary schools provide adequate preparation for higher education to their students, the schools can be additionally gauged as effective.

Numerous studies indicate that schools in the Southwest have a poor record in keeping minority group students enrolled.⁹ College enrollment statistics also show gross underrepresentation of Mexican American, black, and Indian students on the college campuses.¹⁰ Although gradual progress is being made in narrowing the gap, in 1969 the educational achievement levels of most minorities still lagged behind those of the white population as a whole.¹¹ Testifying before the Senate Select Committee on Equal Educational Opportunity, one Mexican American leader expressed his view of the educational inequities experienced by Chicanos:

... the Mexican American has [a lower] educational level than either black or Anglo; the highest dropout rate; and the highest illiteracy rate. These truths stand as massive

⁸ The relationship of earnings to education is clearly demonstrated by census statistics as seen below. In 1969 families where the head of the household had completed high school but gone no further in education, averaged \$10,390 in annual income. This was approximately \$1,500 more than families in which the head of the household had begun but not completed high school, and \$2,900 more than those in which the head of the family had gone only to the eighth grade. On the other side of the scale, when the head had completed 1 to 3 years of college, the family income averaged \$1,400 more annually than if he had only finished high school. When he held a college diploma the family income was \$3,800 more annually than if he had only finished high school.

Education of Heads of Families, 25 Years and Over
By Income, 1969

Years of School Completed	Median Family Income
Grade School:	
Less than 8	\$ 5,438
8	7,483
High School:	
1-3	8,893
4	10,390
College:	
1-3	11,760
4	14,186
5 or more	15,468

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Income in 1969 of Families and Persons in the United States*. Current Population Reports: Consumer Income. Series P-60, No. 75, Dec. 14, 1970. Table 27.

indictments against the present educational system. As well, they are indictments of either negligent or intended homicide against a minority group. In essence, what this system has done is to smother the soul and spirit of an entire people.¹²

⁹ See Studies: *The Challenge and the Chance*, Texas Governor's Committee on Public School Education, Austin, Tex., 1968; *Characteristics of School Dropouts and High School Graduates, Farm and Nonfarm*, James D. Cowhig, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Economic Report, No. 65, Washington, D.C., Government Printing Office, December 1964; *A Study of Equality of Educational Opportunity for Mexican Americans in Nine School Districts of the San Antonio Area*, U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1967; "Some Problems in Minority-Group Education in the Los Angeles Public Schools," Paul Bullock and Robert Singleton, *Journal of Negro Education*, XXXII, No. 2 (Spring 1963) pp. 137-145; "Mexican Americans in Urban Public Schools. An Exploration of the Dropout Problem," Paul Sheldon, *California Journal of Education Research*, Vol. XII, No. 1, January 1961, pp. 21-26; "American Indian High School Dropouts in the Southwest," Willard P. Bass, report of the dropout study conducted by the Southwestern Cooperative Educational Laboratory, Albuquerque, N. Mex., 1968.

¹⁰ While Mexican Americans constituted 17.2 percent of the elementary and secondary enrollment in the five

A. School Holding Power in the Five Southwestern States

Estimates were made of school holding power¹³ in the elementary and secondary years based on enrollment information provided by the superintendents of the sampled districts.¹⁴ This information consisted of the number of students of each ethnic group enrolled in grades 4, 8, and 12. Using these data as a base, allowances were made for those factors, other than dropouts, which affect the enrollment in these grades. These included allowances to account for those students transferring from private into public schools between grades 4 and 12 and for the differential population growth rates of each ethnic group. The resulting holding power rates from the fourth grade were then used to estimate holding power from the first grade by accounting for the small loss of pupils between grades 1 and 4.¹⁵

The college going rates for each ethnic group were calculated by combining the 12th grade holding power rates with principals' estimates of the percentage of graduating seniors of each ethnic group who enter college.¹⁶ For the total five Southwestern States, it was possible to cal-

Median Years of School Completed by Age,
November 1969 and March 1970

Race or Ethnic Group*	25 & over	24-34	35 & over
White **	12.2	12.6	12.1
Black **	9.6	12.1	8.8
Persons of Spanish Origin ***	9.3	11.7	8.5
Mexican	8.3	10.8	7.3

* Categories not mutually exclusive.

** As of March 1970. Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census Current Population Survey of 1970. Some of these data appear in U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Educational Attainment*, March 1970. Current Population Reports: Population Characteristics, Series P-20, No. 207, Nov. 30, 1970, Table 1.

*** As of November 1969. Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census Population Survey of November 1969. Some of these data appear in U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Persons of Spanish Origin in the United States*, November 1969. Current Population Reports: Population Characteristics, Series P-20, No. 213, February 1971, Table 14. (For more detailed data on education of persons of Spanish Origin, see Appendix D.)

Southwestern States in 1968, they comprised only 5.6 percent of the college undergraduate enrollment. Blacks in these five States were 9.9 percent of the elementary and secondary enrollment and 5.5 percent of the undergraduate college enrollment. 1970 college enrollment statistics indicate only a very minute increase in minority representation on Southwestern college campuses. (See Appendix D, Tables 1 and 2.)

¹¹ 1969 and 1970 census information from two surveys shows that the education levels of blacks and persons of Spanish origin are still considerably behind those of the white population as a whole.

¹² Mario Obledo, Director, Mexican American Legal Defense Fund, *Hearings before the Select Committee on Equal Education Opportunity of the U.S. Senate, Part 4: Mexican American Education*, Washington, D.C., August 1970, p. 2519.

¹³ For purposes of this report, a school holding power rate is defined as the percentage of those students entering the first grade who have remained in school through a given grade.

¹⁴ See Superintendents' Questionnaire, Appendix A, Question #11.

¹⁵ For a detailed explanation of the processes used to calculate holding power in the elementary and secondary years, see Appendix C, Part I.

¹⁶ Principals' Questionnaire, Appendix A, Question #15.

culate an approximation of college holding power using HEW college enrollment statistics for each ethnic group. Comparing enrollments in the first and last years of college, allowances were made for the yearly increase in entering college freshmen and for students leaving college during their senior year. The resulting college holding power rates were then combined with the college going rates to obtain the estimates of college graduation rates for each ethnic group.¹⁷

The Commission found that a high proportion of minority students who attended public schools in the surveyed districts¹⁸ in the Southwest drop out before completing a full course of study. Furthermore, the proportion of minority students who remain in school through the 12th grade is much lower than the proportion of Anglo¹⁹ students. Only in the lowest grades are minorities held in school at approximately the same rate as the Anglos. Finally, only a small percentage of minority high school graduates go on to college and still fewer actually complete the work and receive degrees. (See Figure 1).

In the American Southwest as a whole, Mexican Americans have the highest estimated rate of attrition among the three major ethnic groups before high school graduation. The loss also begins earlier among Chicanos.²⁰ By the eighth grade, according to the Commission's estimates, 9 percent of Mexican Americans have already left school. At the time of high school graduation, only 60 percent of Chicanos are still in school.

Among blacks, of every 100 youngsters entering first grade in the districts surveyed by the Commission, 99 attend the eighth grade, but only an estimated 67 receive high school diplomas.

By contrast, of every 100 Anglos who enter

¹⁷ A detailed explanation of the processes used to estimate college holding power is found in Appendix C, Part II.

¹⁸ As noted earlier, the Commission's study encompassed those districts in the five Southwestern States which had a 10 percent or more Mexican American enrollment. Mexican Americans in these districts constitute 88 percent of all Mexican American public school students in the Southwest. Sixty percent of all black students and 50 percent of all Anglo students in public schools in the Southwest are also enrolled in these districts.

¹⁹ As used in this report, the term Anglo refers to all white persons who are not Mexican American or members of other Spanish Surnamed groups.



the first grade in the survey area nearly all attend the eighth grade and about 86 finish high school.²¹

²⁰ Chicano is another term used to identify members of the Mexican American community in the Southwest. The term has in recent years gained a great deal of acceptance among young people, while among older Mexican Americans the term has long been in private use and is now increasingly being used publicly. The term is receiving wide currency in the mass media. As used in this and other Commission reports dealing with Mexican Americans, the term Chicano is intended only as a variation of the term Mexican American.

²¹ The most recent estimates of school holding power for the Nation as a whole are as follows:

- Of students in the fifth grade in 1959-60:*
- 97 percent entered the ninth grade in 1963
- 85 percent entered the 11th grade in 1965
- 72 percent graduated from high school in 1967

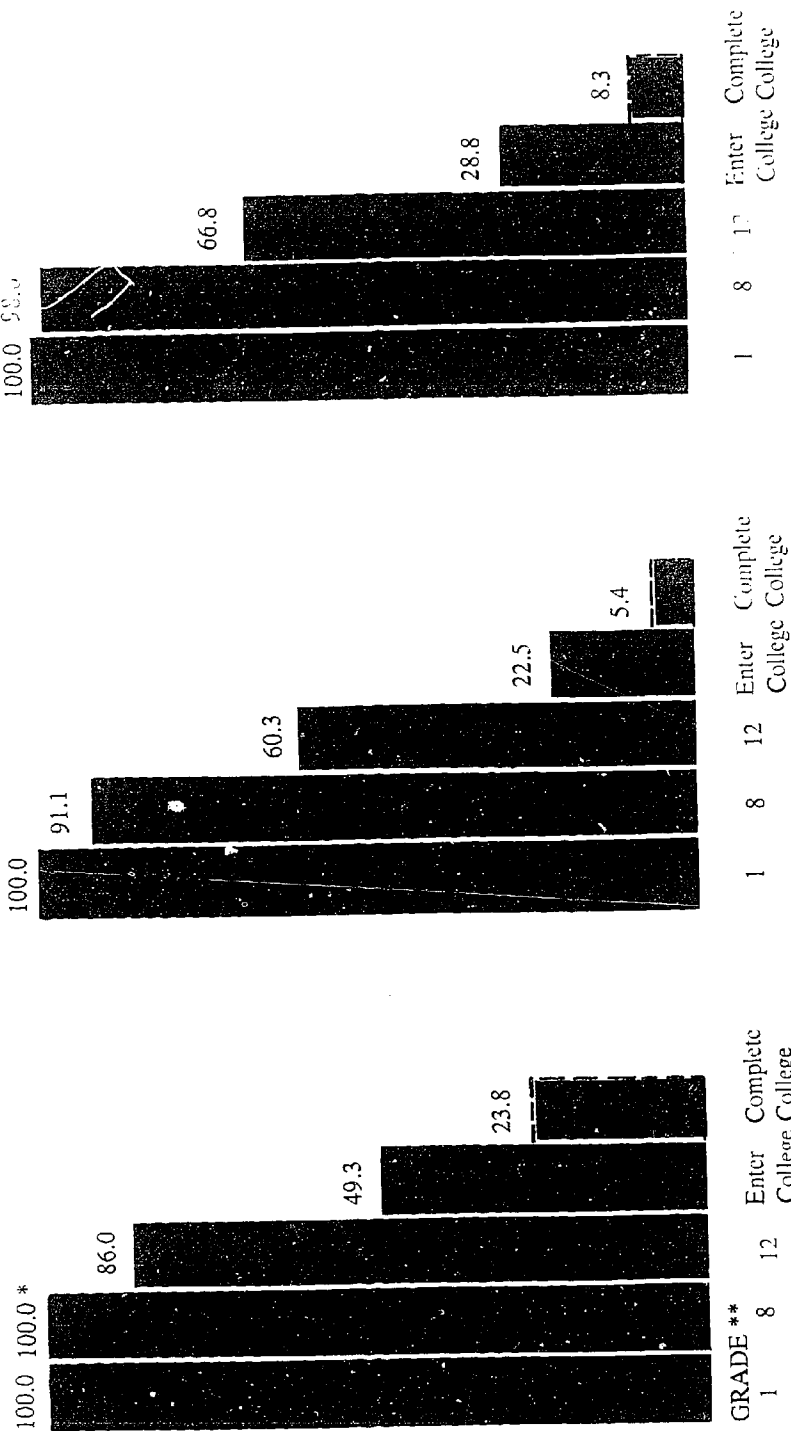
Comparable estimates derived by the Commission for all students in the Southwest survey area in 1969 are as follows:

- Of those who enter first grade:
- 97 percent finish the eighth grade
- 76 percent receive a high school diploma

* Source: U.S. Office of Education, *Digest of Educational Statistics*, 1969, Table 8.

SCHOOL HOLDING POWER RATES FOR EACH ETHNIC GROUP FIVE SOUTHWESTERN STATES

ANGLO



MEXICAN AMERICAN

BLACK

* Holding power rates are approximate estimates based on data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census and HEW. Consequently, the holding power rates for the 1980-81 school year are not available for the 1980-81 school year. The figures for each grade represent the percent of students remaining after 7 months of the school year; therefore, they are an approximation of those who complete that school year. For the 12th grade enrollment, estimates suggest that less than 1 percent of those enrolled on March 31st would fail to graduate from high school.

** The figures for each grade represent the percent of students remaining after 7 months of the school year; therefore, they are an approximation of those who complete that school year. For the 12th grade enrollment, estimates suggest that less than 1 percent of those enrolled on March 31st would fail to graduate from high school.

The gap in holding power between Anglo pupils and members of the two minority groups continues into the college years. While nearly one of every two Anglo students [49 percent] who begin school can expect to enter college, only about one in every four Mexican Americans and blacks do so [23 percent of Mexican Americans and 29 percent of blacks].²²

Of those who do enter college, the differential loss for minority students continues, although it is not as great as in the high school years. The Commission estimates that only five Mexican Americans and eight blacks of every 100 who begin school in the survey area ever receive a college diploma. Anglos in the survey districts graduate from college at a rate of 24 for every 100 who begin school.

School Holding Power by State

The performance of the public schools in keeping students in school varies among the individual States of the Southwest, although the pattern is similar in each. In all the five States, public schools retain Anglo students through the 12th grade at a much higher rate than they do either blacks or Mexican Americans. In Colorado and Arizona, the estimated school holding power for Mexican Americans is higher than for blacks but in California and Texas, the two most populous States in the sample, the reverse is true.²³

Differences among the States are more pronounced for Mexican Americans. The lowest holding power rate for Mexican Americans, as well as for all groups, is for Mexican American 12th graders in Texas which is 53 percent. Arizona with 81 percent and New Mexico with 71 percent show the highest holding power in the survey for Mexican Americans. The difference between Texas and California, the two States with the largest numbers of Mexican Americans, is 11 percent. In contrast, holding power for blacks and Anglos is relatively constant among the five States.

²² In fall 1967, the national average for all students entering college was four out of every 10 students who had entered the fifth grade 8 years previously. One-half of these, or two of every 10 fifth graders, were expected to graduate from college in 1971. U.S. Office of Education, *Digest of Educational Statistics*, 1969.

²³ Statistics on student enrollment in each of the five States, by ethnic group, is found in Appendix D.

B. Arizona

In Arizona, as in the Southwest as a whole, Anglos have the lowest rate of loss. At the eighth grade, 99 percent of all Anglo students in the survey area are still in school; by grade 12, 89 percent still attend. In contrast, while 97 percent of Mexican American students are still in school by the eighth grade, this proportion dwindles to 81 percent by the 12th grade. The lowest holding power in Arizona is that for black students. In the survey area it was found to be 95 percent at the eighth grade and only 72 percent at the 12th grade.

Examining these percentages another way, in Arizona Mexican Americans are 1.7 times and blacks 2.7 times more likely than Anglos to leave prior to high school completion.²⁴

Arizona School Holding Power

	Grade 8	Grade 12	Enter College
Anglo	99.2	88.9	53.3
Mexican American	96.5	81.3	33.0
Black	94.6	71.6	29.3

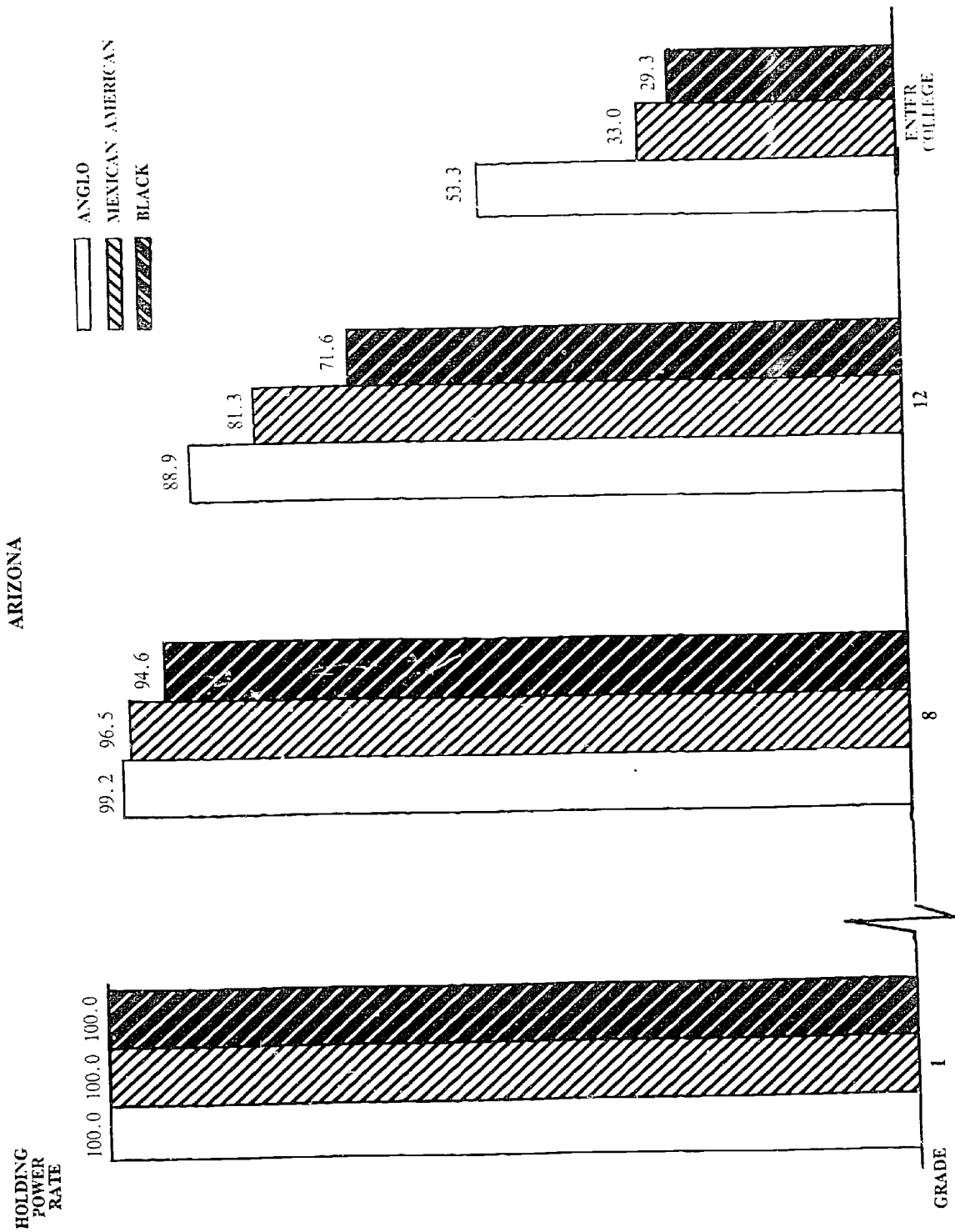
Of those students who enter the first grade, it is estimated that slightly more than half the Anglos will enter college, but only about one-third of the Chicanos and blacks will do so. However, the rate at which Mexican Americans enter college in the Arizona survey area is considerably higher than the 23 percent estimated for this group in the Southwest as a whole.

C. California

The California schools surveyed by the Commission have a better record of retaining Chicanos until grade 12 than the Southwest as a whole. Even so, fewer than two out of every three Mexican American students, or 64 percent, ever

²⁴ To obtain these ratios, the holding power rate of each ethnic group is first subtracted from 100 percent, resulting in the corresponding attrition rates. The Anglo attrition rate is then divided into the attrition rates of blacks and of Mexican Americans. The results represent the ratio of students of each minority leaving school to Anglo students leaving school. A 1.0 ratio would mean that the minority attrition rate was the same as the Anglo attrition rate.

FIGURE 2
ESTIMATES OF SCHOOL HOLDING POWER RATES
FOR EACH ETHNIC GROUP



graduate. By the eighth grade about 6 percent of Mexican American students have already left school.

California School Holding Power

	Grade 8	Grade 12	Enter College
Anglo	100.0	85.7	46.9
Mexican American	93.8	63.8	28.2
Black	97.3	67.3	34.0

More striking than the percentage loss in California is the actual number of students involved. If the present holding power rate in the California survey area persists throughout the State, of the approximately 330,000 Mexican American students in grades 1 through 6 in 1968, about 120,000 or 36 percent, will fail to graduate from high school. Of about 190,000 blacks in the same grades, roughly 60,000 will never receive a high school diploma.

In the California districts surveyed, Mexican Americans are 2.5 times more likely than Anglos to leave school before high school graduation while blacks are 2.3 times as likely not to graduate.

The estimated rate for blacks going to college in California is 34 percent, higher than in any of the other four Southwestern States. However, it is still well below the rate for Anglos [47 percent] and somewhat higher than that for Chicanos [28 percent].

D. Colorado

Among the five Southwestern States, Colorado has the highest estimated school holding power rate for Anglos. The two minorities also fare slightly better in the Colorado schools surveyed by the Commission than in those of the Southwest as a whole. Even so, the Colorado holding power rates for minorities do not nearly approximate those for Anglos.

Colorado holds minority students quite well through the eighth grade. By the 12th, however, both blacks and Mexican Americans who are still in school have lost from 29 to 33 percent of their peers. Black students are 5.6 times and

Colorado School Holding Power

	Grade 8	Grade 12	Enter College
Anglo	100.0	94.8	50.6
Mexican American	99.0	67.4	14.6
Black	100.0	70.9	*

* Number too small for analysis.

Mexican Americans 6.3 times more likely than Anglos to leave school prior to the 12th grade.

The estimated college entrance rate for Chicanos in Colorado is the lowest for any group in any State—only 15 percent. The rate for Anglos is similar to the Anglo rate in other States.

E. New Mexico

Although the ethnic composition of the State of New Mexico is substantially different from that of the other Southwestern States,²⁵ holding power rates in this State generally follow the pattern found elsewhere. In New Mexico it was possible to estimate the holding power of public schools for Indians as well as for Mexican Americans and Anglos because of the relatively large Indian population of the State.²⁶

²⁵ The 1968 survey of HEW found a total of 271,039 public school students in the State, 25 percent less than in Arizona. Thus, New Mexico is the least populous State in the study sample. New Mexico's Anglo student population makes up just slightly more than one-half of the total, the smallest percentage of Anglos in any State in the Southwest, and, with the exception of Hawaii, in the Nation. Of the five States, New Mexico also has the largest number of Indian public school students—19,742 in 1968; this group makes up slightly more than 7 percent of the public school student population. On the other hand, the State has the smallest black student population in the sample, with only 5,658 students or 2.1 percent of the total enrolled. Thirty-eight percent of the school population is Mexican American. This percentage is almost twice that of Texas where Mexican Americans make up 20.1 percent of the school population. (See Appendix D, Table 1).

²⁶ The figures are confounded slightly by the inclusion with the Indian population of the relatively few Orientals in that State. The Commission's information was actually gathered by using the category "Other". The HEW survey found that 97.3 percent of persons in this category in New Mexico are Indian, the remainder being mostly Oriental. It must be noted that only Indian students attending public schools were included in the Mexican American Education Study sample.

FIGURE 3
ESTIMATES OF SCHOOL HOLDING POWER RATES
FOR EACH ETHNIC GROUP

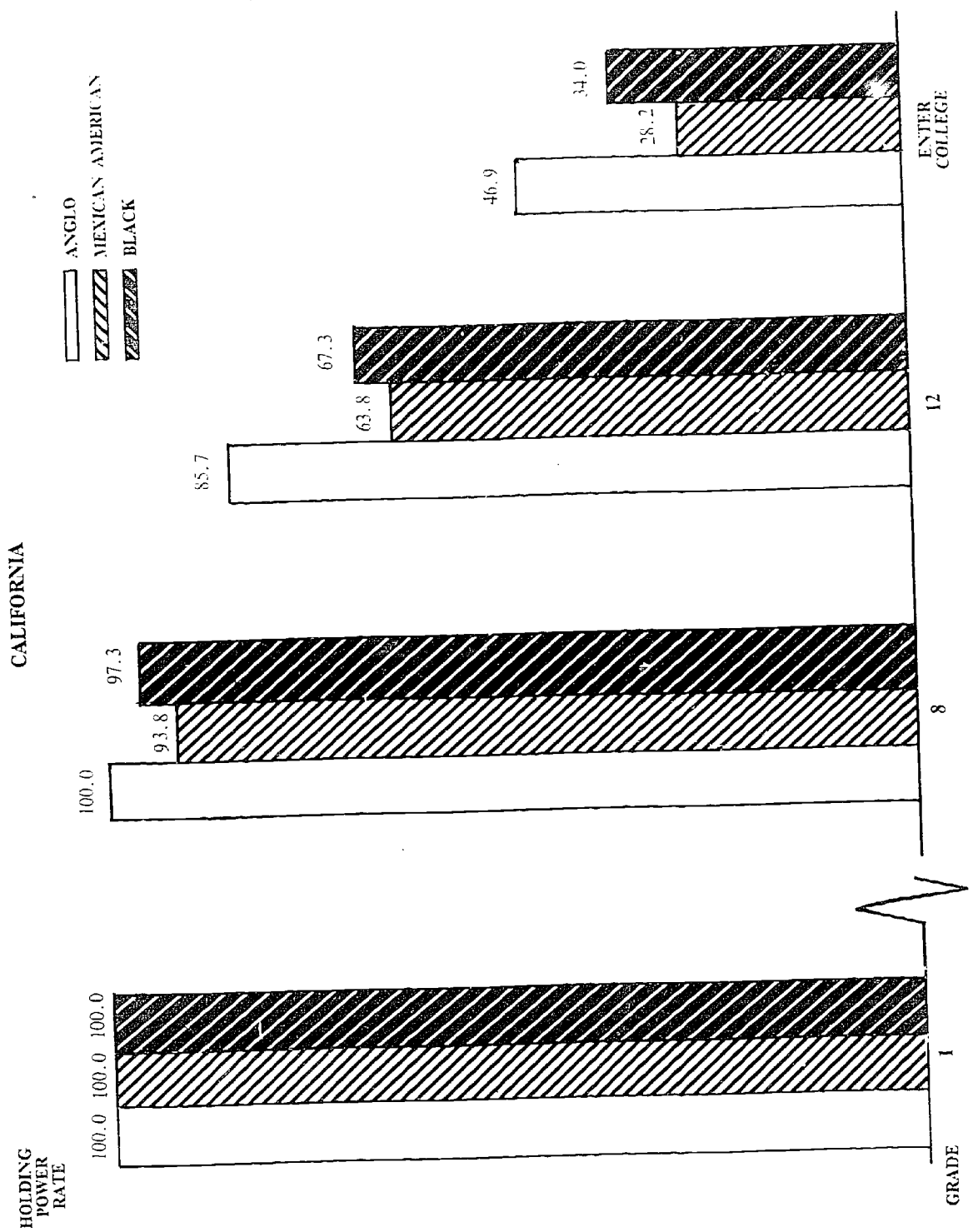
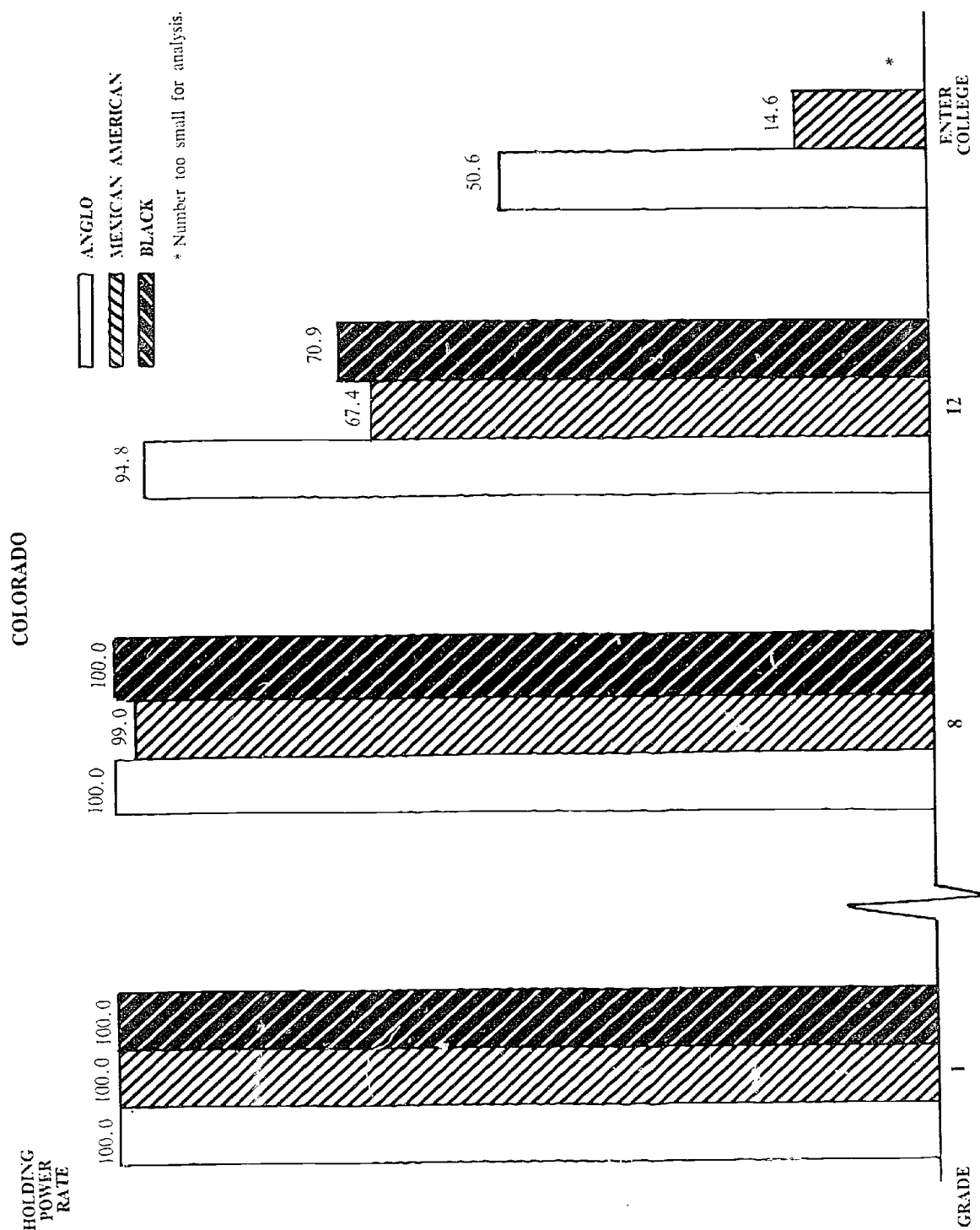


FIGURE 4
ESTIMATES OF SCHOOL HOLDING POWER RATES
FOR EACH ETHNIC GROUP



In New Mexico school districts surveyed by the Commission, public school Indians have the highest rate of loss, followed by Mexican Americans and Anglos in that order.²⁷ In the survey area, an estimated 93 percent of Indians who begin school are still there through the eighth grade. However, by the end of the 12th grade, nearly one of every three has left school.²⁸ Mexican Americans are held by the schools up to the eighth grade at the rate of 93 percent, but the rate declines to about 71 percent by the 12th grade.

New Mexico School Holding Power

	Grade 8	Grade 12	Enter College
Anglo	96.9	79.4	52.9
Mexican American	93.4	71.1	22.2
Other (97.3% Indian)	92.7	67.6	24.8

Although Anglos are more likely to remain in the survey schools in New Mexico than Mexican Americans and Indians, their holding power rates in this State are lower than in any other Southwestern State. The Commission estimates that only 79 percent of Anglo youngsters who begin school graduate from high school.

In other words, the Mexican American's chance of dropping out of school before the 12th grade is 1.4 times greater than that of the Anglo

²⁷ Because of their small numbers, no reliable estimates of black holding power in New Mexico could be made.

²⁸ These rates are representative only of Indians attending New Mexico public schools in districts which are 10 percent or more Mexican American. For other studies of Indian attrition see: *The American Indian High School Dropout: The Magnitude of the Problem*, Alphose D. Selinger and Robert R. Rath, Field Paper #30, Northwest Regional Education Laboratory, 1968; *Dropout or Graduate? A Synthesis of Three Studies on the Degree of Success of American Indian High School Students in the Southwest*, William P. Bass and Marian J. Tonjes, Southwestern Cooperative Educational Laboratory, Albuquerque, N. Mex., 1969; *American Indians and Educational Laboratories*, Willard P. Bass and Henry G. Burger, Publication #1-1167, Southwestern Educational Laboratories, Inc., Albuquerque, N. Mex., 1967; *An Analysis of Academic Achievement of Indian High School Students in Federal and Public Schools: A Progress Report*, Southwestern Educational Laboratories, Inc., Albuquerque, N. Mex., May 1969.

student, while the American Indian's chance is 1.6 times greater.

Mexican Americans and Indians in the New Mexico survey area have similar estimated rates of entry into college [22 percent and 25 percent respectively]. Both of these rates, however, are less than one-half that of Anglos.

F. Texas

The Texas survey area demonstrates the poorest record of any of the Southwestern States in its ability to hold minority students in school. The State's performance in keeping Mexican American pupils in school is especially poor.

Texas School Holding Power

	Grade 8	Grade 12	Enter College
Anglo	100.0	85.1	53.0
Mexican American	86.1	52.7	16.2
Black	98.8	64.4	26.7

While Anglo and black enrollments remain nearly the same through the eighth grade, Mexican American enrollment decreases sharply during that period. *By the end of the eighth grade, Chicano students in the Texas school districts surveyed have lost nearly as high a proportion of their peers [14 percent] as Anglos will lose altogether at the end of another 4 years.* Before the end of the 12th grade, nearly one-half, or 47 percent, of Mexican American pupils have left school. As in California, this percentage represents an extremely large number. In 1968 there were about 290,000 Mexican Americans in grades 1 through 6 in the public schools of Texas. If present rates are allowed to continue, about 140,000 of these Texas youngsters will never receive a high school diploma.

Black children also fare badly in Texas. During the high school years a severe drop in enrollment occurs for black students. Of those who enter the first grade, an estimated 34 percent leave between the eighth and 12th grades. During the same years, 33 percent of the Mexican Americans leave school but 14 percent have already left earlier.

FIGURE 5

ESTIMATES OF SCHOOL HOLDING POWER RATES
FOR EACH ETHNIC GROUP

NEW MEXICO

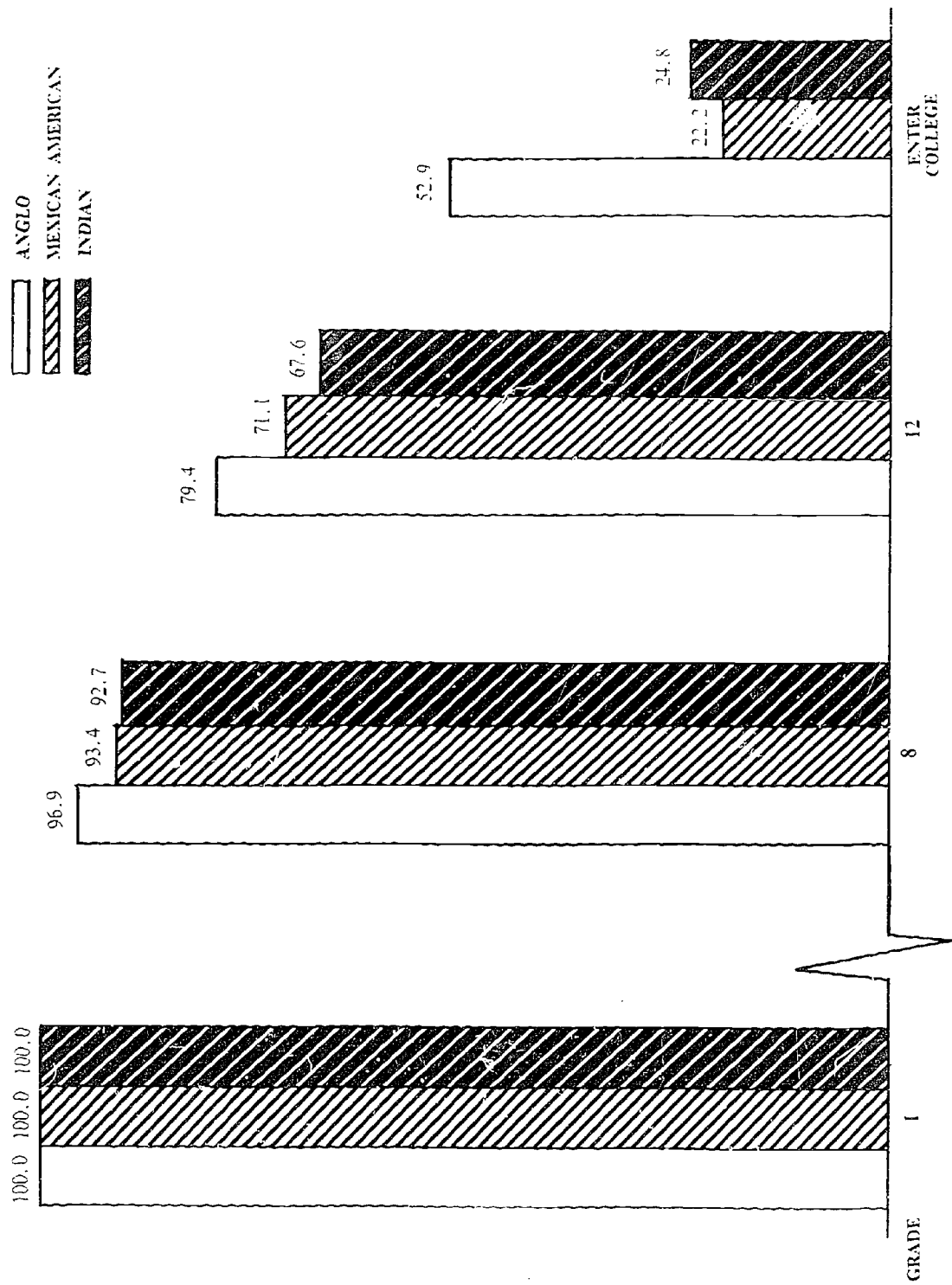
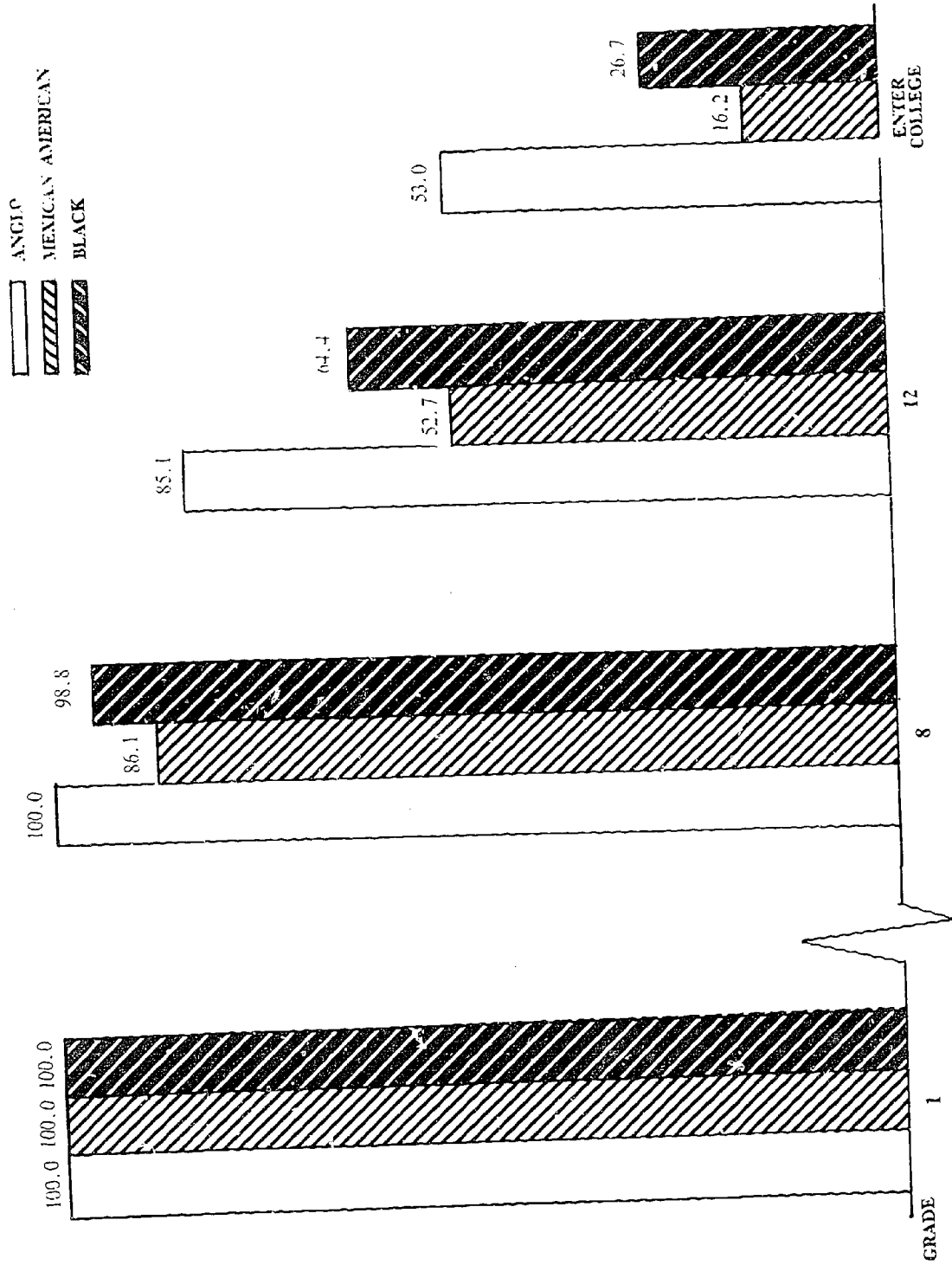


FIGURE 6

ESTIMATES OF SCHOOL HOLDING POWER RATES
FOR EACH ETHNIC GROUP

TEXAS



The likelihood that Mexican Americans in the Texas survey area will drop out before high school graduation is 3.2 times that of the Anglo's. Blacks are 2.4 times more likely than Anglos not to finish high school.

The holding power rates for minorities in Texas high schools are followed by even more depressed rates of entry into college. Fewer than one of every six Chicanos who begin school in Texas enters college. The black proportion, one of every four, is somewhat better but even this is only one-half the Anglo college going rate in the districts surveyed.

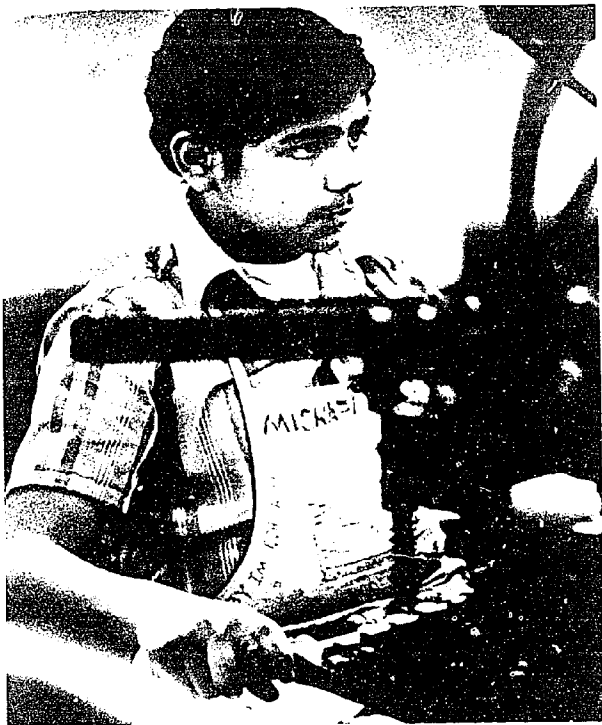
In summary, in all States of the Southwest,

school holding power at all levels is poorer for minority than for majority students.

Losses of both Mexican American and black students before graduation are extremely heavy, although Mexican Americans in the Commission's survey area appear to leave school earlier than blacks. Perhaps most disturbing is the numerical comparison between those entering first grade and the projected few among Mexican Americans and blacks who complete college.

If the public schools of the Southwest maintain their present low rates of holding power with minority students, large numbers will not receive even the minimum of a high school education and only a handful will receive college diplomas.





II. Post-High School Experiences

Students who have graduated from high school face important decisions concerning their futures. Some, who are academically and economically eligible, go on to college, where they acquire knowledge and skills that generally equip them to obtain well paid, often professional, jobs and to assume positions of increased responsibility and prestige in the community.

Others seek additional training in nonacademic institutions, where they acquire the vocational skills needed to obtain jobs such as laboratory technicians, beauticians, and computer programmers. Still others enter military service.

The Commission sought to compare the post-high school experiences of Anglo, Mexican American, and black graduates in the five Southwestern States. In the school districts surveyed it found that not only are minority students less likely than Anglos to finish high school, but also that those who graduate are much less likely to go on to college. Principals in the schools surveyed estimate that in 1968, 37 percent of Mexican American graduates, 43 percent of black graduates, and 57 percent of Anglo graduates went on to college.²⁹

On the other hand, Mexican American and black graduates entered the military at much

higher rates than Anglo graduates. Based on 1968 rates, the Mexican American graduate in the Southwest is twice as likely as the Anglo graduate to enter the military while the black graduate is 2.5 times as likely. (See Table 1).

The same general pattern found in the Southwest as a whole is found in the individual States: Anglo graduates are more likely to go on to college, while minorities are more likely than Anglos to enter some other form of post-secondary education or the military.

Of the five States, the California schools surveyed have the highest rate of minority graduates entering college. In that State 51 out of every 100 black high school graduates and 44 out of every 100 Mexican American graduates are reported to go on to college. By contrast, in Colorado only one of every five Mexican American graduates goes on to college. In the New Mexico and Texas survey area, fewer than one out of every three does so. In Colorado, New Mexico, and Texas Anglo high school graduates are more than twice as likely as Mexican Americans to enter college.

For blacks and Mexican Americans, the percentage of graduates entering other post-secondary education, i.e., noncollege, ranges from 6 to 10 percent, with the exception of Arizona, where 17 percent of the Mexican American graduates undertake this type of program.

The likelihood of entering the military following high school graduation is generally twice as high for minority high school graduates as it is for Anglos. An unusually large percentage, 15 percent, of black graduates in California do so. In Texas the proportion of graduates entering the military is high for both Chicanos [10 percent] and blacks [8 percent]. The percentage of Anglos entering the military is consistently low in comparison, ranging from 3 to 4.5 percent.

Indians who graduate from New Mexico public schools in the survey area are even less likely than Mexican Americans to go on to college. Only 23 percent of high school graduates enter college. However, about the same proportion enters some other form of post-secondary education.

²⁹ In 1967 56 percent of all high school graduates in the Nation as a whole entered college. See U.S. Office of Education *Digest of Educational Statistics*, 1969 (Table 8).

Table 1. Post-Graduation Outcomes*

	Anglo	Mexican American	Black
TOTAL SOUTHWEST			
Percent of high school graduates entering:			
College	57.3	37.4	43.2
Other post-secondary education	5.4	7.7	6.9
Military	3.7	7.5	9.1
All Other	33.6	47.4	40.8
	100.0	100.0	100.0
ARIZONA			
College	60.0	40.6	40.9
Other post-secondary education	4.9	17.3	5.8
Military	4.4	8.8	6.2
All Other	30.7	33.3	47.1
	100.0	100.0	100.0
CALIFORNIA			
College	54.8	44.2	50.6
Other post-secondary education	5.3	5.9	5.8
Military	3.8	5.4	15.3
All Other	36.1	44.5	28.3
	100.0	100.0	100.0
COLORADO**			
College	53.4	21.6	
Other post-secondary education	5.4	7.6	
Military	4.5	8.9	
All Other	36.7	61.9	
	100.0	100.0	
NEW MEXICO**			[Indian ***]

College	66.7	31.2	22.9
Other post-secondary education	8.3	6.5	23.4
Military	3.5	8.8	7.5
All Other	21.5	53.5	46.2
	100.0	100.0	100.0
TEXAS			
College	62.2	30.7	41.4
Other post-secondary education	4.3	9.7	7.4
Military	3.1	10.4	8.1
All Other	30.4	49.2	43.1
	100.0	100.0	100.0

* High school principals were asked to estimate the percentage of the previous year's graduates who had entered either college, other post-secondary education, or the military. (Principals' Questionnaire, Appendix B, Question #15). Consequently all graduates who had not entered one of these areas would be included in the category "All Other", regardless of their occupation or status.

** Number of black graduates in Colorado and New Mexico is too small to make reliable estimates.

*** For the State of New Mexico only, this column reflects percentages for Indians.

III. READING ACHIEVEMENT

School holding power represents only a quantitative measure of a school's effectiveness. It does not measure the quality of education the child receives nor does it indicate the quality of individual achievement. Reading achievement levels have traditionally been recognized as a means of determining school achievement because ability to read is usually necessary to succeed and progress in other academic subjects.

The importance of reading is widely recognized by educators, and compensatory reading programs almost always are given a high priority in those schools which are attempting to overcome student achievement deficits.

In a recent article, Sidney P. Marland, U.S. Commissioner of Education, acknowledged the belief that reading is central to almost all achievement in school:

Acknowledging all the explanations and justifications, we must, as a Nation, discover ways to teach all mentally adequate citizens to read. Even at the expense of the very important [other] programs, this essential function of civilized man must have pre-eminence in our priorities. Otherwise, our best intentions in other social interventions, such as job development, equal opportunity, housing, welfare, and health will have only passing and peripheral effect.³⁰

The Relationship Between Reading Achievement and Dropouts

Poor reading achievement and dropouts go hand in hand. Obviously, not all poor readers drop out; nor do all dropouts show poor reading skills. Nonetheless, dropouts generally show lower achievement and grade-point averages than do nondropouts.³¹

A number of previous studies have demonstrated this relationship. One study found that 64 percent of the dropouts were reading below average, 17 percent were reading in the average range, and another 20 percent above average. Nearly twice as many students who were retarded in their reading achievement dropped out of school than did students who showed average or



above average reading skills.³² In another study, it was found that 44 percent of the school dropouts were reading two or more years below grade level. Only 7 percent were reading up to grade standard.³³

A third study compared low reading achievers with high reading achievers (the students' reading scores were divided into quartiles). Although only 15 percent of the students in the top quartile dropped out, 50 percent of those in the lowest

³⁰ National Education Association. *School Dropouts: Research Summary*. 1967S1. Washington, D.C., 1967, p. 15.

³¹ Kirkhus, Harold. *1962-63 Dropouts*. Peoria, Ill., Board of Education, Peoria Public Schools, Sept. 19, 1963, p. 27.

³² Young, Joe M., "Lost, Strayed, or Stolen", *Clearing House* 29, 88-92, October 1954.

³³ *American Education*, HEW OE, Washington, D.C., Vol. 7, No. 1, January-February 1970, p. 4.

quartile did so.³⁴

The findings of one researcher who conducted two studies on the relationship between reading retardation and the tendency to drop out of school showed the following:³⁵

	First Study	Second Study
Dropouts Reading Average or Above Average	25%	30%
Total Dropouts Reading Below Grade Level	75%	69%
One Grade Below Grade Level	28%	22%
Two Grades Below Grade Level	19%	26%
Three Grades Below Grade Level	28%	21%

A. Reading Achievement in the Schools of the Southwest

The Commission found, on the basis of information provided by school principals,³⁶ that from 50 to 70 percent of Mexican American and black students in the fourth, eighth, and 12th grades are reading below the level expected for the grade to which they are assigned. In contrast, only 25 to 34 percent of all Anglo youngsters in these grades are reading below grade level. This approaches a two-to-one ratio of below-average reading achievement for students of minority groups. (Figure 7).

³⁴ Penty, Ruth C. *Reading Ability and High School Dropouts*, New York Teachers College, Columbia University, 1956. p. 93. Summary, *Journal of the National Association of Woman Deans and Counselors* 23: 11-15, October 1959.

³⁵ Snapp, Daniel W. "Why They Drop Out? 8 Clues to Greater Holding Power." *Clearing House* 27: 492-94; April 1953. Snapp, Daniel W. "Can We Salvage the Dropouts?" *Clearing House* 31: 49-54; September 1956.

³⁶ See Question 46 on Principals' Questionnaire, Appendix B. The data the principals provided regarding student reading levels were based on two sources of information. The first was principal and teacher judgments on the rate of progress of the child; the second were data from previously administered tests of reading achievement; often, the two data sources were combined.

³⁷ The Commission estimates that about 40 percent of Mexican Americans and 33 percent of black students leave school before graduation.

Reading Retardation With Increasing Age and Grade

The Commission also found that reading achievement does not improve with advancing age and grade for children of any ethnic group. For Mexican American and black students, however, it usually becomes significantly worse than for Anglos. School principals in the survey areas report that 51 percent of Mexican American and 56 percent of black pupils in the fourth grade are reading below grade level, compared with only 25 percent of Anglo students. These percentages increase by the eighth grade to 64 percent for Mexican Americans and 58 percent for black students.

Percent of Students in the Southwest Reading Below Grade Level

	Grade 4	Grade 8	Grade 12
Anglo	25	28	34
Mexican American	51	64	63
Black	56	58	70

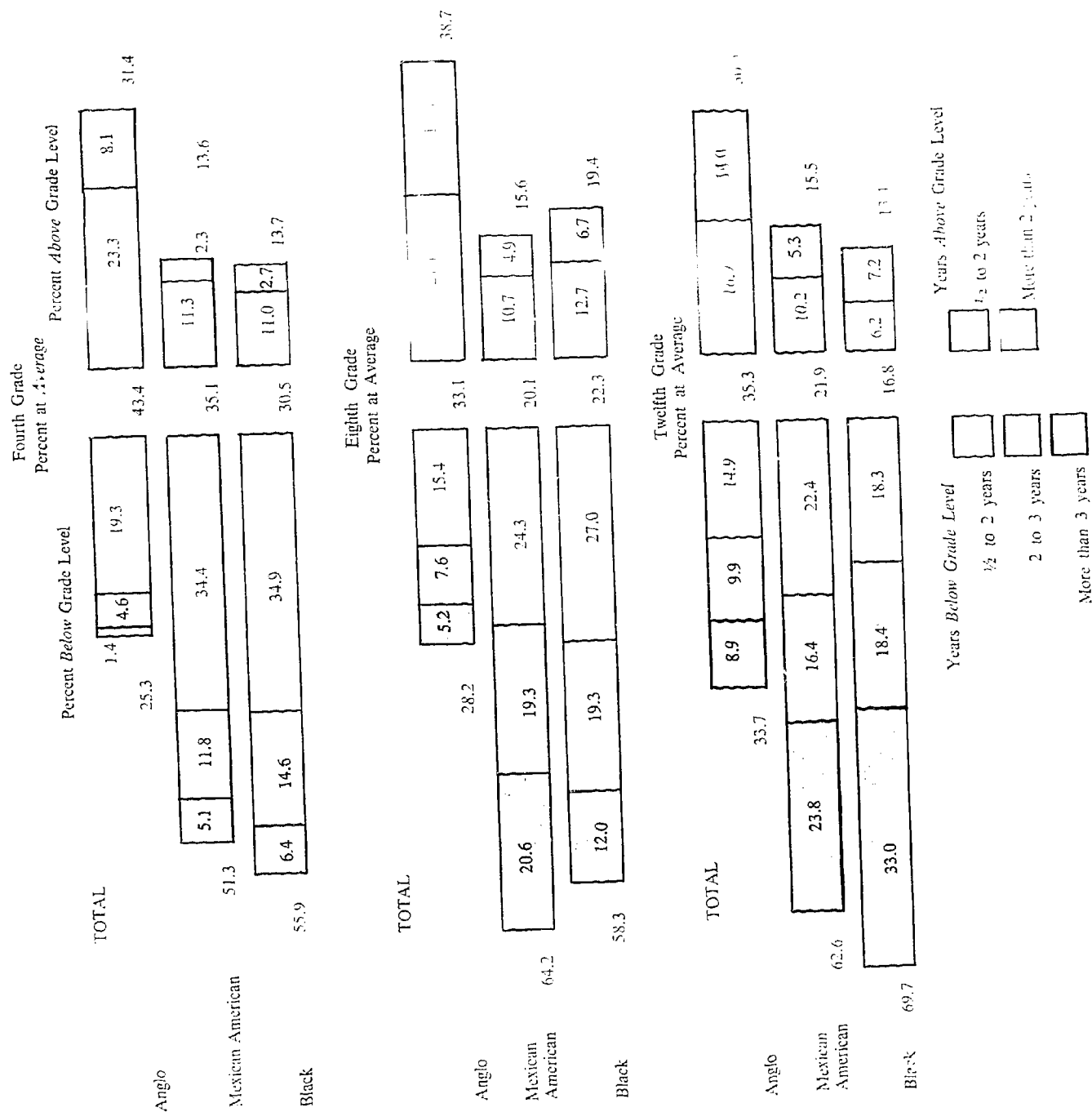
By the 12th grade, despite the fact that many of the poorest achievers have left school,³⁷ 63 percent of the Mexican American and 70 percent of the black students are still performing below grade level in reading. The reading achievement of Anglo youngsters also declines between the fourth and eighth grades and again from the eighth to the 12th grades, but the drop is not nearly as dramatic as it is for minority students. About 75 percent of the Anglo children are reading at or above average in the fourth grade. In the 12th grade, 66 percent are still performing satisfactorily.

Severe Reading Retardation With Increasing Age and Grade

The problem of *severe* reading retardation³⁸ also increases the length of time Mexican American and black youngsters remain in school. In the fourth grade 17 percent of Mexican American and

³⁸ The term, *severe reading retardation*, as used in this report, means retardation that is two or more years below grade level.

Figure 7—ESTIMATED READING LEVELS IN THE SOUTHWEST



20 percent of black pupils already read two or more years below grade level by the 12th grade, 40 percent of the Mexican American students and more than half the black students or 51 percent, are experiencing severe reading retardation. (Figure 7).

In evaluating this poor showing, it should again be remembered that the 12th grade figures do not reflect the achievement levels of students who left school early. In view of the relationship between poor reading achievement and dropouts, the figures on the extent of severe reading disabilities would undoubtedly be even higher if they included the performance of the earlier dropouts.

Reading Achievement by States

What is true of reading achievement levels in the Southwest as a whole is also true generally for the survey area in each of the five Southwestern States individually.

The analysis of reading achievement in individual States reveals four common elements: (a) Anglo youngsters always have a substantially smaller proportion of poor readers than do any of the minority groups; (b) the proportion of pupils who are reading below grade level increases for all groups as higher grades are reached; (c) the extent of severe reading disabilities also grows for all ethnic groups with increasing years; and (d) black students are reading at somewhat lower levels than Mexican Americans.

B. Arizona

About one in every four Anglo students in the Arizona schools surveyed is reading below grade level by the fourth grade. Most of these are reading one-half to 2 years below grade level. This distribution reflects the reading achievement of Anglos for the Southwest as a whole. Mexican American and black youngsters, however, are reading at rates far below those of Anglos by the fourth grade. Approximately 44 percent of the Mexican American and 55 percent of the black students—about twice the Anglo proportion—are reading below grade level. (Figure 8).

By the eighth grade, the percentage of students in all groups reading below grade level has increased. For Anglos, the proportion which is below grade level has increased from 25 to 33 percent. The greatest increase, however, is for

Mexican American students. The proportion of these students reading below grade level has risen from 44 percent at the fourth grade to 66 percent at the eighth grade. The percentage of black youngsters who are reading below grade has also significantly increased. By the eighth grade two-thirds, or 65 percent, of black youngsters in the Arizona survey area do not possess adequate reading skills.

Unlike some other States where reading achievement levels appear to improve at grade 12, fully three-quarters of all Mexican American 12th graders are reading below grade level. *Furthermore, nearly half of all Mexican Americans are reading three or more years below grade level by grade 12.*

The situation for blacks is even worse. While at the eighth grade about two-thirds of the black students surveyed are reading below grade level, by the time they reach the 12th grade, more than three-quarters, or 77 percent, are reading below grade level. *Furthermore, more than half of all 12th grade black students are reading three or more years below grade level.*

This phenomenon may occur because of the comparatively high school holding power in Arizona.³⁹ In other States substantial numbers of those whose reading achievement is low are likely to drop out. But the school holding power in Arizona would seem to increase the percentage of 12th grade Mexican Americans reading below grade level.

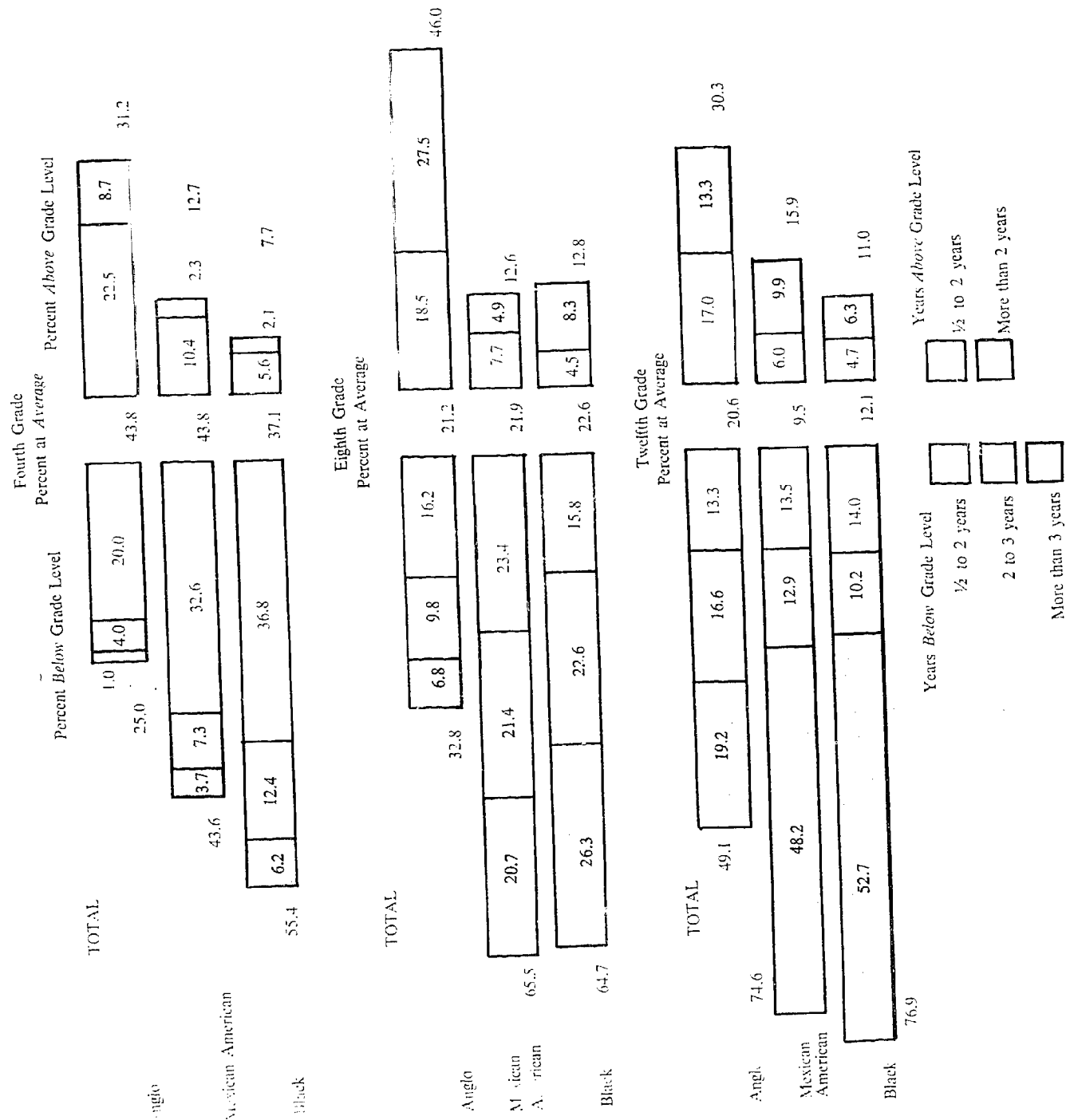
Even for the Anglo students, the picture is not promising in Arizona. Nearly half of the 12th grade Anglo students in the survey schools are reading below grade level, twice the proportion found in the fourth grade.

C. California

The reading achievement record of California students is poor to begin with and does not improve in the higher grades. In California, unlike other States, reading achievement does not worsen appreciably as the children progress through school. However, a substantial percentage of children are reading below grade level as early

³⁹ Commission estimates of school holding power in Arizona at grade 12 are: 89 percent for Anglos, 81 percent for Mexican Americans, and 72 percent for blacks.

Figure 8—ESTIMATED READING LEVELS IN ARIZONA



as the fourth grade and they remain poor readers throughout their school careers. (Figure 9).

At the fourth grade level about 25 percent of Anglo students in the survey schools are reading below grade level. Twice that percentage, or 52 percent, of Mexican American fourth graders are reading below grade level. In other words, more than half of all Chicano students in the California survey area are already reading below their grade assignment by the fourth grade. Approximately 55 percent of black youngsters are also reading below grade level in the fourth grade. The general picture does not change appreciably by grade 8, but the proportion of those students whose reading difficulties have been allowed to grow from mild to severe increases substantially. While all three ethnic groups regress, reading achievement levels for the two minority groups fall behind at a faster pace.

By the time California Anglos are ready to graduate from high school, more than one-third of those surveyed are reading below grade level. It is the Mexican American, however, whose reading retardation has become the most severe. Upon graduation 63 percent are reading below grade level and 39 percent have not advanced beyond the 10th grade in reading. Nearly one-quarter, or 22 percent, of 12th grade Mexican American students in California are reading at the ninth grade level or lower. The black student in California is almost as badly prepared in reading. About 59 percent are reading below grade level.

Because California is the most populous of the five Southwestern States—with at least 646,000 Mexican Americans and about 384,000 black students enrolled in its public schools—this situation awakens particular concern. Such concern is heightened by the realization that an estimated 36 percent of Mexican Americans and 33 percent of blacks in California are gone by grade 12 because of low school holding power. This represents a staggering loss of potentially well-educated and productive manpower.

D. Colorado

About one-quarter of Colorado's Anglo population in the schools surveyed is reading below grade level by the fourth grade. However, more than twice as high a proportion of Mexican Americans—57 percent—have not even taught

reading skills commensurate with their fourth grade placement. Blacks are in an even more critical situation with 62 percent having reading deficiencies as early as the fourth grade. (Figure 10).

Unlike the pattern in other States, in Colorado, it is the Anglo student whose reading achievement falls most sharply in the 4 years from the fourth to the eighth grades. Although one-quarter of the Anglos surveyed are reading below grade level in the fourth grade, by the eighth grade one-third are deficient in reading. The proportion of Mexican Americans who are reading below grade level at grade 8 remains almost the same as that found at grade 4. However, the proportion of Mexican Americans with *severe* reading problems has almost doubled: from 19 percent at the fourth grade to 34 percent at the eighth. The percentage of blacks reading below grade level increases slightly from grade 4 to grade 8. Once again, however, there is a substantial increase in severe reading deficiencies from the lower to the higher grade.

By the time they graduate, the proportion of Anglo students in the Colorado survey area experiencing reading retardation has decreased and is back to about one-quarter. For minority students, however, despite heavy attrition, the proportion with reading deficiencies increases. Even with 33 percent of the original Mexican American student body gone, nearly 60 percent of those still in school are reading below grade level, and about 40 percent of these are 2 years or more behind. Reading achievement for blacks is even more deplorable. Nearly two-thirds of those ready to graduate are reading below grade level and 46 percent have the reading skills of a 10th grader or less.

E. New Mexico

Because of New Mexico's unique ethnic distribution,⁸ it might be expected that reading achievement levels would be different from those in the other four States. They are not. (Figure 11).

Similar to other Southwestern States, 25 percent of Anglo fourth graders in the New Mexico schools surveyed are reading below grade level. Nearly twice this proportion, 48 percent, of Mexican Americans are reading below grade level.

⁸ See footnote number 25, p. 14

Figure 9—ESTIMATED READING LEVELS IN CALIFORNIA

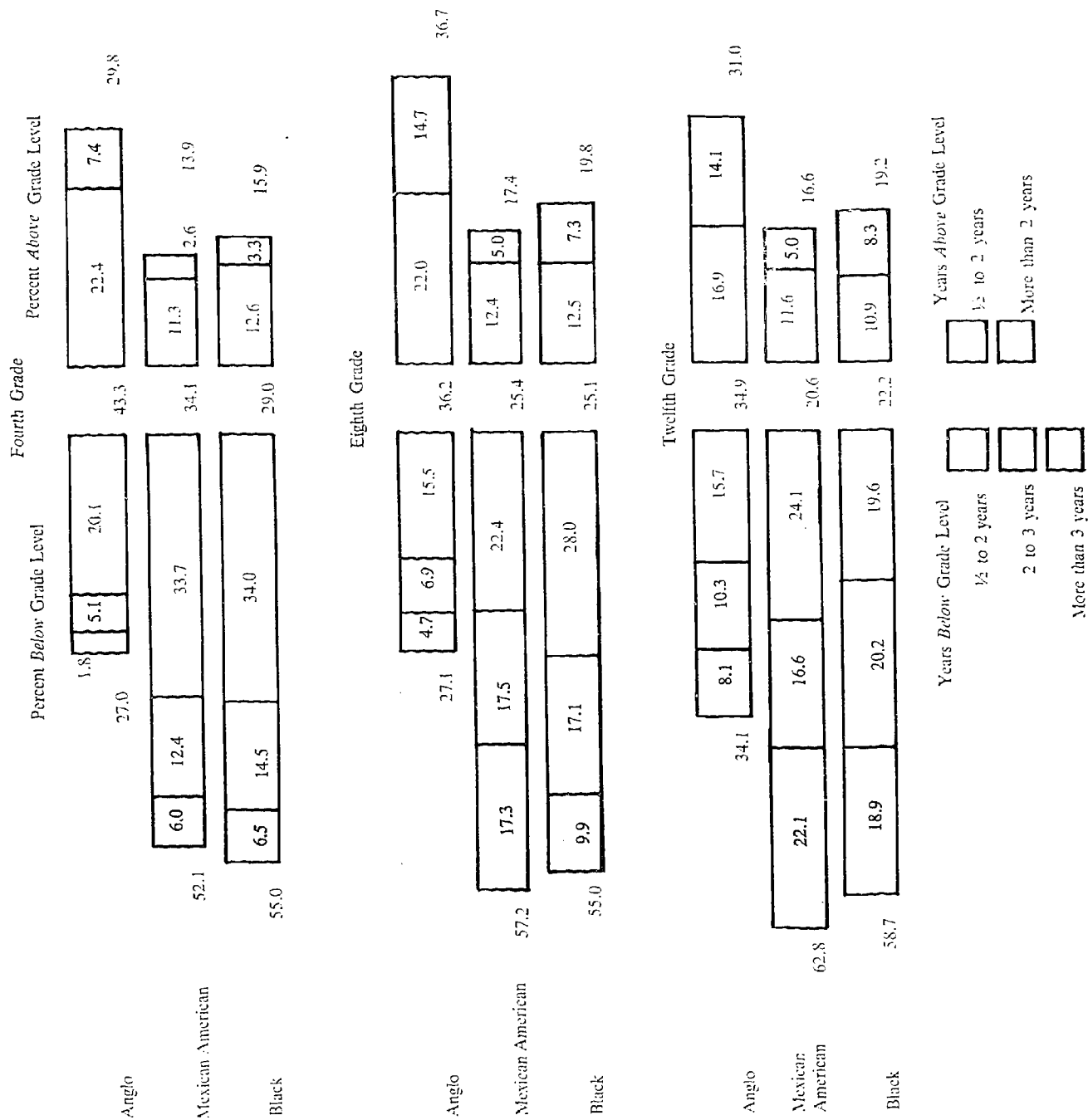
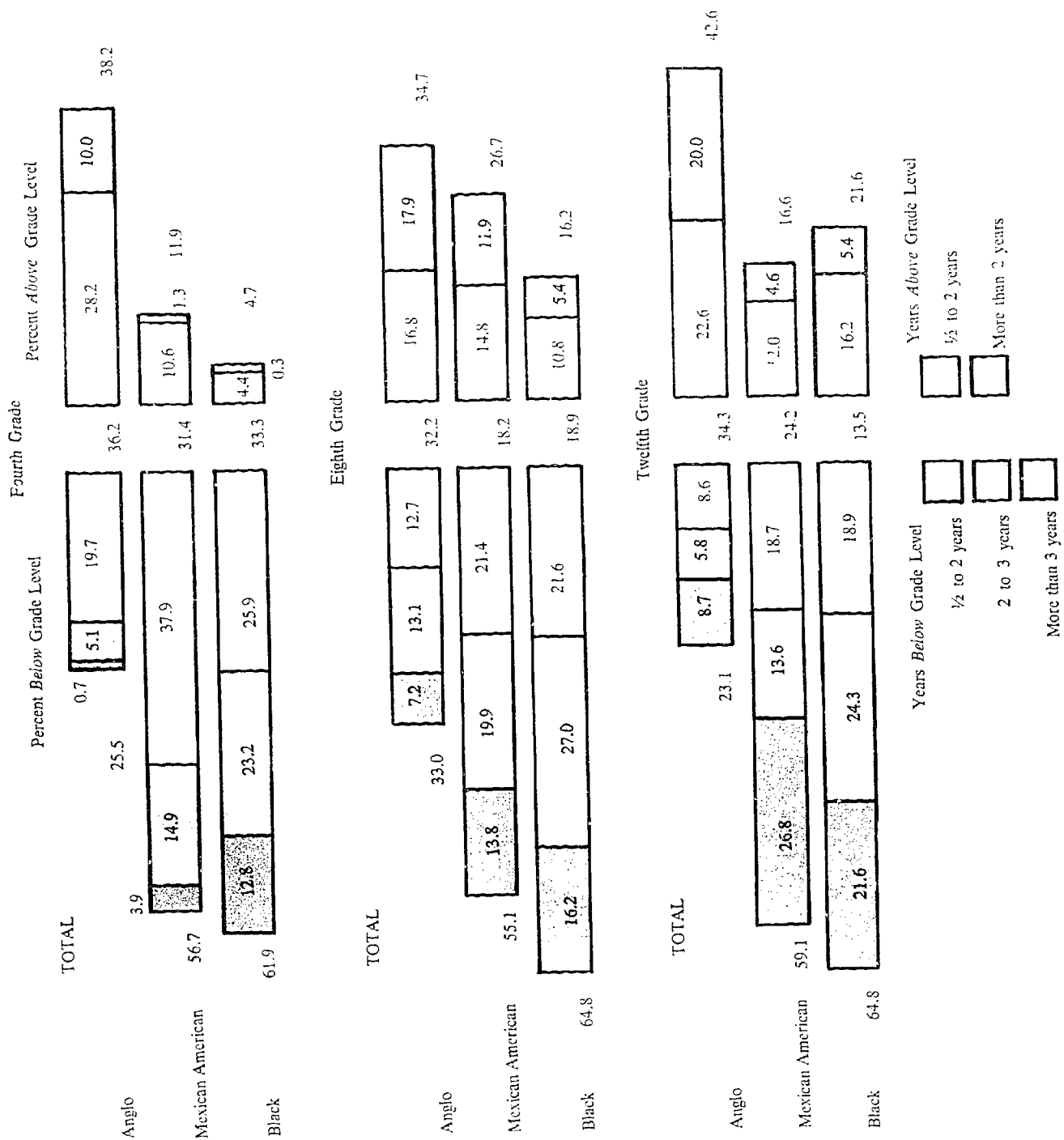


Figure 10—ESTIMATED READING LEVELS IN COLORADO



The poorest reading achievement is found among Indian students. More than half, 52 percent, of the Indian children in the Commission's New Mexico sample are deficient in their reading by the time they are in the fourth grade.

As higher grades are reached, reading achievement in New Mexico becomes progressively worse for all groups. By the eighth grade, approximately 35 percent of Anglo children in the survey area are reading below grade level, 10 percentage points more than at grade 4. Further, while at the fourth grade only about 5 percent are in the severely deficient reading category, by the eighth grade, 14 percent of New Mexico Anglos are two or more years behind.

A similar decline in reading achievement occurs for Mexican Americans in New Mexico. In grade 4, 48 percent are reading below grade level but at grade 8 the proportion has risen to 58 percent. Worse yet, the proportion of Mexican Americans with severe reading difficulties has increased from 17 percent at grade 4 to 26 percent at grade 8.

The pattern is similar for public school Indian children. About 57 percent of Indian eighth graders are reading below grade level, and, of these, 30 percent are two or more years below grade level in reading.

If the situation does not appear to deteriorate as badly by grade 12, it is probably because the schools have failed to hold many of those whose reading achievement was the lowest. Despite the very high rate of loss, however,⁴¹ the reading picture is still poor. About 34 percent of Anglo children in the New Mexico survey schools continue to experience deficiencies in reading. The proportion of Anglos with severe reading deficiencies, however, increases only from 14 to 16 percent from grade 8 to grade 12.

The proportion of Mexican Americans who are reading below grade level declines from 58 percent at grade 8 to 54 percent at grade 12. Again, this "gain" is probably a result of the low school holding power. Still, more than half the Mexican Americans who graduate from New Mexico high schools do not read at acceptable levels. Furthermore, the proportion in the severe

⁴¹ The Commission estimates that 21 percent of Anglos, 29 percent of Mexican Americans, and 32 percent of Indians do not graduate from the survey high schools in New Mexico.

reading retardation category has risen slightly, from 26 percent at the eighth grade to 28 percent at the 12th grade reading two or more years below grade level.

For Indian public school students the situation is even more dismal. Three-fourths are reading below grade level at high school graduation and fully 63 percent are reading two or more years below grade level.

F. Texas

In analyzing the reading achievement of Texas' students, two important factors must be kept in mind. First, it is a very populous State with large numbers of minority group members. The 505,000 Mexican Americans attending its public schools constitute about 20 percent of the total public school population. Nearly 380,000 blacks comprise about 15 percent of the enrollment. Hence, minority group children make up more than one-third of the public school student population in Texas. Second, any appraisal of reading achievement must be made in cognizance of the very low holding power of Texas public schools—the lowest of the five States the Commission surveyed. It is estimated that in the schools surveyed in Texas, only 53 percent of Mexican Americans and 64 percent of blacks who enter first grade in the school districts surveyed receive a high school diploma.

The Anglo fourth grade population in Texas appears to fare relatively well in reading achievement. About 21 percent of those surveyed are reading below grade level, a figure which is slightly higher than for most other States. At the same grade, however, 52 percent, or half of the Mexican American students, are deficient in their reading skills. Blacks at grade 4 show an even lower achievement; nearly three of every five students are not reading at grade level. (Figure 11).

By the eighth grade, a modest increase is seen in the approximately 28 percent of Anglos who are behind in their reading. But for the Mexican American the increase is substantial. *Nearly three-quarters of the Mexican American eighth graders in the survey area are reading below average. Further, nearly half the Mexican American eighth grade population is reading two or more years below grade level.*

For black students, reading achievement levels

Figure 11—ESTIMATED READING LEVELS IN NEW MEXICO

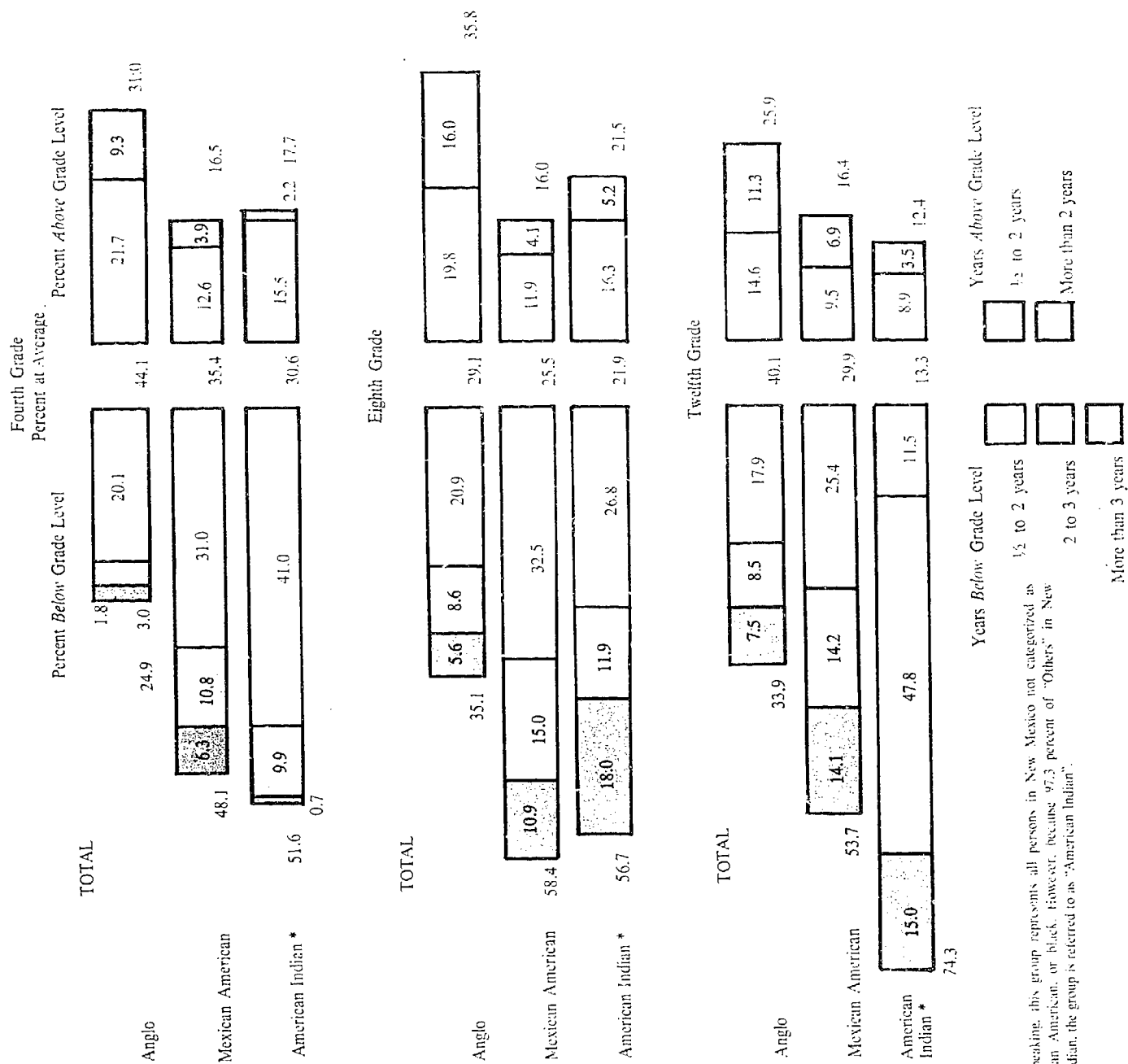
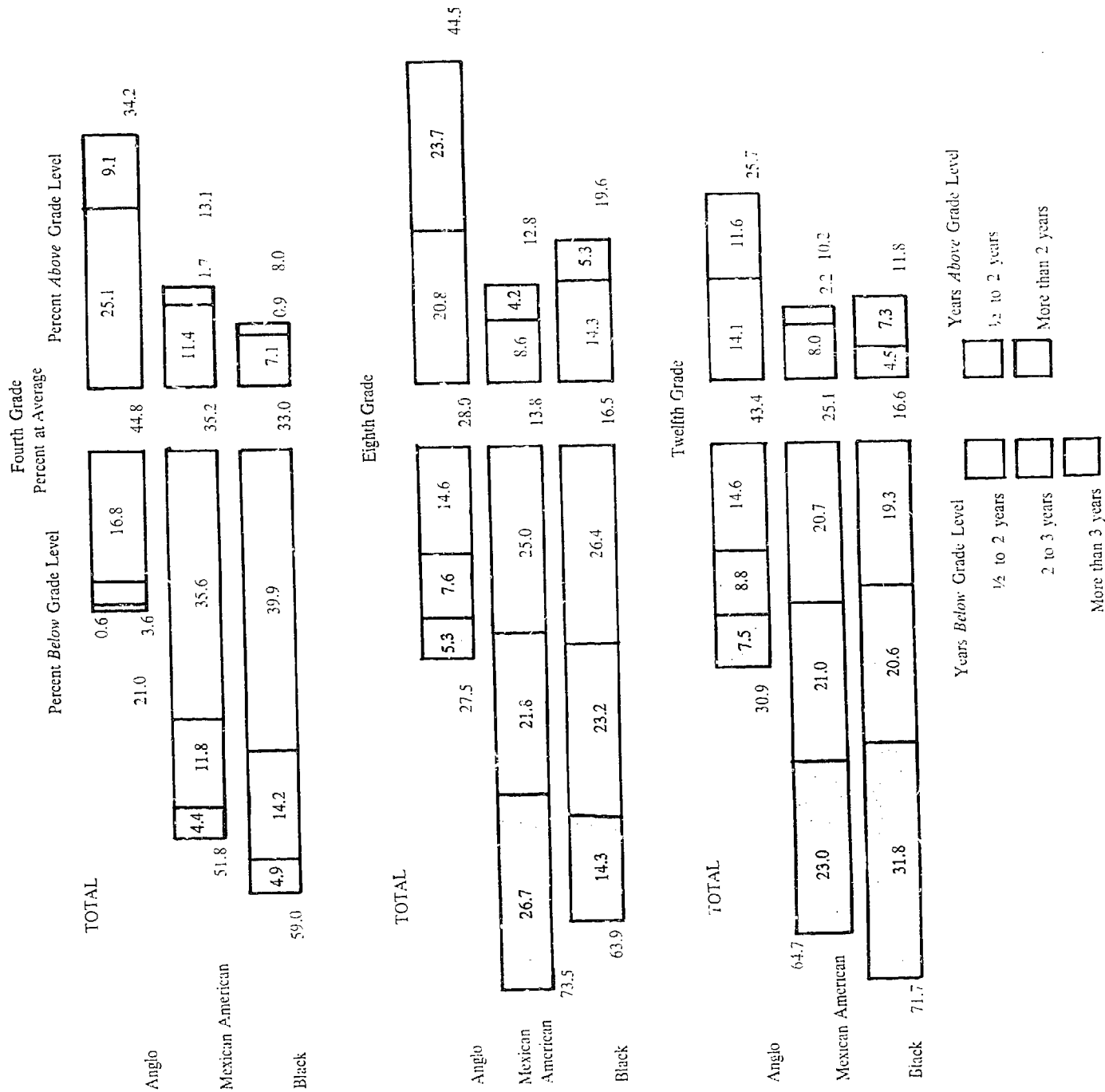


Figure 12—ESTIMATED READING LEVELS IN TEXAS



have also declined. Sixty-four percent of the black students are reading below grade level when they reach the eighth grade. The majority of these are severely retarded in reading. Thirty-eight percent of the total black eighth grade population in the Texas schools surveyed are reading at sixth grade level or below.

For Mexican Americans, the situation appears to improve between grades 8 and 12. It must be remembered, however, that in Texas nearly 50 percent of this group has dropped out of school before reaching the 12th grade. Thus, the improvement in reading achievement is an illusion. Nevertheless, two-thirds of the Mexican Americans who remain in school through the 12th grade are deficient in their reading ability by the time they are ready to graduate from high school and about 44 percent suffer severe reading retardation.

Perhaps because blacks have a somewhat higher estimated holding power rate, the pattern of seeming improvement found for Mexican Americans does not hold for them. While at the eighth grade, 64 percent of black students are reading below grade level, by grade 12, the proportion has risen to 72 percent. Fifty-two percent are reading two or more years below their 12th grade level.

G. Inter-State Comparisons on Selected Items

In each of the States, no fewer than 44 percent of Mexican American students and 55 percent of black students in the fourth, eighth, and 12th grades are reported by their principals to be reading below the level expected of students in their respective grades.

The lowest estimated reading levels Mexican Americans reach are in Arizona where 75 percent of Chicano students read below grade level by



grade 12 and in Texas where, at grade 8, 74 percent are reading below grade level. The situation in Texas is especially disturbing since 47 percent of Mexican American students in the Texas survey area never graduate. Conversely, the 75 percent of students reading below grade level at grade 12 in Arizona schools may merely reflect that State's somewhat higher holding power over the lower achieving students.

For black youngsters, the most serious reading retardation is generally to be found in the 12th grade. In Arizona, 77 percent of black students in the survey area read below grade level in this grade; in Texas, 72 percent. Again, the apparently high rate of reading retardation in Arizona may reflect its comparatively better school holding power. *On the other hand, Texas exhibits a uniformly low school reading record for both black and Mexican American students and, at the same time, exhibits low school holding power rates for both groups.*

IV. GRADE REPETITION AND OVERAGENESS

Grade repetition and its correlate, overageness for grade assignment, are two other ways in which school achievement can be measured.

There are several reasons why students may be required to repeat a grade. Because of illness, they may miss so much classwork that they are not promoted. In addition, they may be judged too emotionally immature to move into a higher grade. The most common reason why students are retained, however, is the teacher's perception that they have failed to perform at an acceptable academic level. If the teacher believes that the student does not have sufficient grasp of the necessary academic skills and materials, he is very often retained in the same grade for another year.

The connection between grade repetition and overageness is obvious. Barring a child's late entry into school, the primary cause of a student being overage is grade repetition. Unless a student begins school before the normal age, one school year repetition will make him one year older than other students at his grade level, two repetitions, two years older, and so on throughout his school career.

Extent of Grade Repetition

Most grade repetitions occur in the first grade, according to data obtained in the Commission's Survey. It was found that Mexican American youngsters in the schools surveyed are much more likely to be retained than either Anglos or blacks. (See Table 2).

Table 2. Percent of Students Repeating Grades in the First and Fourth Grades by State and Ethnic Group, 1969

GRADE REPETITION—FIRST GRADE						
	Arizona	California	Colorado	New Mexico	Texas	Total
Anglo	5.7	5.6	3.9	8.5	7.3	6.0
Mexican American	14.4	9.8	9.7	14.9	22.3	15.9
Black	9.1	5.7	7.7	19.0	20.9	8.9
GRADE REPETITION—FOURTH GRADE						
	Arizona	California	Colorado	New Mexico	Texas	Total
Anglo	0.8	1.6	0.7	0.9	2.1	1.6
Mexican American	2.7	2.2	1.7	4.2	4.5	3.4
Black	0.7	1.0	1.3	1.0	5.1	1.8

Overall, Mexican Americans in the schools surveyed are almost three times as likely to repeat the first grade as Anglos and almost twice as likely as blacks. In the survey area, nearly 16 percent of all Mexican American youngsters in the first grade are reported to be repeaters. This compares with only 6 percent of Anglos and 9 percent of blacks.⁴²

Among the five Southwestern States, the highest incidence of grade repetition for Mexican Americans and blacks is found in Texas. In that State, more than 22 percent of Mexican Americans and nearly 21 percent of blacks repeat the first grade. This is about three times the Anglo rate of 7 percent. By contrast, in California about 10 percent of the Mexican American students repeat the first grade, compared to less than 6 percent of the Anglo and black students.

Colorado has the lowest repetition rate for Mexican Americans and Anglos. In that State, fewer than 10 percent of all Mexican American pupils and fewer than 8 percent of all blacks repeat the first grade. Again, both of these rates are at least twice the 4 percent rate for Anglos. The smallest difference in rate of repetition among all groups occurs in California.

At the fourth grade level, Mexican Americans are still the group most likely to be held back for another year. A Mexican American student in the Southwest is about twice as likely as his Anglo or black classmates to repeat the fourth grade.

Severe Overageness

Commission Survey statistics also reveal that at all grade levels for which data were collected, a large proportion of Chicano children throughout the Southwest and in each of the five States are two or more years overage⁴³ for their grade level.⁴⁴ Overageness is generally more prevalent among blacks than Anglos, but less so than among Mexican Americans. (See Table 3). At the first grade level, Mexican American children

are four times as likely to be two or more years overage than either Anglo or black students. By the eighth grade, the proportion who are overage (9.4 percent) is almost eight times as high for Mexican Americans as for Anglos, and more than four times as high for black students.

As in the case of grade repetitions, the problem of overageness among Mexican American pupils is most severe in the State of Texas. In that State, by the eighth grade 16.5 percent, or one of every six Mexican American pupils surveyed, is two or more years overage, as compared to one of every 15 blacks and only one of every 48 Anglos. California, on the other hand, has the lowest proportion who are overage. In that State, one out of every 43 Mexican American eighth graders is 2 years or more overage compared to one out of every 125 Anglos.

There appears to be a strong relationship between grade repetition and low student achievement. *Thus, the State of Texas, which has the highest proportion of grade repetition for Mexican Americans in the first and fourth grades, also has 74 percent, the highest proportion, of Mexican American eighth graders reading below grade level.* By contrast, in California, where fewer Mexican Americans repeat a grade, a smaller percentage of Mexican American eighth graders are reading below grade level.

A number of studies have indicated that students who have been retained ultimately achieve at a lower rate when they have been required to stay at the same grade level for another year.⁴⁵

Grade repetition is also related to the "language problem" of Mexican American students. In many schools of the Southwest, Mexican American children are frequently required to repeat the first grade until they are judged to have sufficient mastery of the English language to study their subjects in English.⁴⁶ In Texas, grade

⁴² See Principals' Questionnaire Appendix B. Questions 18a, and 46k.

⁴³ In this report, a student who is two or more years overage for his grade level is considered to be severely overaged.

⁴⁴ See Principals' Questionnaire, Appendix B. Questions 18b and 46b.

⁴⁵ See Studies: Saunders, Carleton E. *Promotion or Failure for the Elementary School Pupil*. Teachers College, Columbia University 1941; Coffield, William R. and Hal Bloomers "Effects of Non-Promotion on Educational Achievement in the Elementary School", *Journal of Educational Psychology* Vol. 47, 1956, pp. 235-250.

⁴⁶ The Commission's 1969 Survey found that in districts that were 10 percent or more Mexican American, the principals surveyed estimated that 50 percent of Mexican American children who entered first grade did not speak English as well as the average Anglo first grader. See the forthcoming third report in this series on-

Table 3. Severe Overageness
Percent of Pupils Two or More Years Overage, By Grade, State, and Ethnicity

Ethnic Group	Grade	Arizona	California	Colorado	New Mexico	Texas	Total
Anglo	1	0.7	0.9	0.7	0.4	0.7	0.8
	4	1.2	0.7	0.5	2.7	1.3	1.0
	8	1.1	0.8	0.6	2.3	2.1	1.2
	12	1.4	0.1	2.5	1.7	4.9	1.4
Mexican American	1	2.5	1.7	2.1	1.7	6.6	3.9
	4	5.6	2.1	2.3	5.5	12.0	6.9
	8	11.8	2.3	1.5	10.8	16.5	9.4
	12	10.9	2.3	3.9	6.8	10.5	5.5
Black	1	1.5	0.7	0.9	...	3.2	1.2
	4	1.3	0.7	0.7	2.0	6.1	1.8
	8	3.0	0.3	...	1.8	6.7	2.1
	12	5.5	1.9	5.4	9.1	4.6	4.4



repetition for Mexican Americans has become institutionalized. School districts in Texas administer the Inter-American Test of Oral English to all entering first graders in order to determine their language readiness for the grade. If the student scores low on this test, he is placed in a prefirst grade class, and is thereby required to repeat the grade (more precisely his first year in school). Similar practices are found in individual schools in other States.⁴⁷

There also appears to be a relationship between overage and the likelihood of dropping out of school. Comparing overageness of Mexican Americans in the eighth and 12th grades, the Commission found that the percent overage is generally smaller in the 12th grade. For two reasons one would expect the degree of overageness to be *at least* as high in the 12th grade as in the eighth: (1) those who are overage in the eighth grade will be the same number of years or more overage by the 12th grade; and (2) more students are likely to become overage between these two grades. In fact, Anglo students in general do have a higher rate of overageness as grade level increases. The black students' rate also increases in each State except Texas. For Mexican Americans, however, the degree of overageness actually *decreases* in three of the five States: Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas. For the Southwest as a whole the percent of Mexican Americans who are overage drops from 9.4 in 8th grade to 5.5 in 12th grade. Based on these figures it is estimated that at least 41 percent of Mexican American eighth graders who are overaged do not stay in school long enough to complete the 12th grade.⁴⁸

titled *The Excluded Student: Educational Practices Affecting Mexican Americans in the Southwest* 1971.

⁴⁷ In a staff interview in California, one principal at an elementary school with an enrollment almost one-third Chicano described a similar program designed to correct language and emotional maturity deficits at the kindergarten level. Students considered unprepared for first grade work are placed in "Junior First". Many of these students actually repeat the first grade. The principal estimated that 90 percent of the 1969 kindergarten enrollment at his school had been placed at this level.

⁴⁸ There are 41 percent fewer Mexican American students overaged in the 12th grade than in the eighth grade. This decline is considered the minimum attrition rate for overaged Mexican Americans between those grades because it is expected that additional students



A number of other studies have also linked overageness with school dropouts. For example, a U.S. Department of Labor study of seven communities revealed that 53 percent of dropouts were two or more years older than their grade-level peers, and 84 percent were at least 1 year older.⁴⁹ In a study of a Midwestern community it was found that almost 40 percent of all dropouts were two or more years above the normal age range, and an additional 40 percent 1 year overage, for a total of 80 percent one or more years overage.⁵⁰

become overaged in that period. It is estimated that 34 percent of Mexican American eighth graders have left school by the end of the 12th grade. Thus, Mexican Americans who are overaged appear to drop out at a rate at least 1.2 times as high as the average Mexican American student between these grades.

⁴⁹ U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *School and Early Employment Experience of Youth: A Report on Seven Communities, 1952-57*. Bulletin #1277. Washington, D.C. Government Printing Office. August 1960, pp. 5, 17.

⁵⁰ Kirkhus, Harold. *1962-63 Dropouts*. Peoria, Ill.: Board of Education, Peoria Public Schools, Sept. 19, 1963, p. 8.

V. PARTICIPATION IN EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

The quality of education a student receives cannot be evaluated solely by reference to his teachers, to the textbooks he uses, or the curriculum he pursues. Students often learn as much from contacts with their classmates as they do from their textbooks. By the same token, participation in extracurricular activities provides students with special opportunities to expand their personal and intellectual horizons.

Participation in such activities as student government encourages children to develop qualities of leadership and respect for the democratic process which cannot be as satisfactorily gained solely through the ordinary classroom exposure. Work on school newspapers helps students develop clarity of thought and expression which cannot be learned through classroom assignments alone. Participation in the preparation of school social events helps develop a sense of closer identity with the school and contributes to the student's development as a full participant in the larger society he will later enter. In short, participation in extracurricular activities serves both as an important contributor to a child's development as a productive member of society and as an indicator of the school's influence on him.

Indeed, a number of studies have found a close correlation between participation in extracurricular activities and school holding power. A study of 798 dropouts found that 73 percent had never participated in any extracurricular school activity, 25 percent had participated in one or two activities, and only 2 percent had been involved in more than two activities.⁵¹ Another study found that high school graduates participated in an average of 1.6 more activities than did nongraduates.⁵² A third study⁵³ also found evidence of much greater participation by students who graduate than by those who drop out, as shown in the tabulation below.

⁵¹ Dillon, Harold J., *Early School Leavers: A Major Educational Problem*. National Child Labor Committee Publication #401, New York: National Child Labor Committee, 1949, p. 44.

⁵² Van Dyke, L. A., and K. B. Hoyt, *The Dropout Problem in Iowa High Schools*. U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Office of Education, Cooperative Research, Project #160, 1958, pp. 42-45.



	Number	Percent Participating In No Activities	Percent Participating In Three or More Activities
GRADUATES	913	15	55
DROPOUTS	127	76	2

The importance that the schools themselves attach to involvement in extracurricular activities is reflected by the substantial physical and financial resources often invested in these programs. Drama and choral presentations are held in expensive school auditoriums. Musical instruments are purchased for use by bands and orchestras. School facilities are made available and complex equipment is used to publish school newspapers and yearbooks. In many schools a coordinator of student activities holds a staff position.

Students are selected in various ways to participate in particular extracurricular activities. With some activities, such as student government officer or homecoming queen, the selection process is usually through election by the student body. In others, such as newspaper editor, selection is often made on the basis of the judgment of certain school officials. In these cases, where judgments may be subjective, there is an increased likelihood of intervention by the prejudice of individual teachers and principals and, thus, the possibility of participation by minority students is reduced. In addition, special conditions of eligibility are often imposed which, while seeming reasonable on the surface, also serve to limit minority group participation.

Some schools, for example, require that candidates for certain student government offices be selected or approved by members of the faculty. This selection or approval sometimes is made contingent on meeting minimum grade and behavioral standards. Thus, most of the schools visited by Commission staff required a "C" average minimum in academic work. As noted earlier,

⁵⁰ Walsh, Raymond J., *Relationships of Enrollment in Practical Arts and Vocational Courses to the Holding Power of the Comprehensive High School*. Doctoral dissertation, Columbia, Mo.: University of Missouri, 1965.

minority students score lower than their Anglo classmates in reading achievement, a prime indicator of academic performance in all subject areas. Consequently, minimum grade requirements are likely to reduce participation by Mexican Americans and black youngsters in extracurricular activities.

Citizenship marks, usually reflecting an individual teacher's perception of how well a student meets the social expectations of the school, can be a factor that negatively affects minority participation. One study found that "the grades given to Mexican American students in citizenship subjects such as 'work habits' and 'cooperation' were consistently lower than those given to non-Mexicans".⁵¹

Participation in some extracurricular activities involves financial demands. For Mexican American and black students, a disproportionately large number of whom are poor, the cost may be prohibitive. For example, in many high schools visited, Commission staff found the expense incurred in being a cheerleader amounted to more than \$50. In one California high school with a 60 percent Mexican American enrollment, the cost of uniforms and insurance was \$176 for each cheerleader.

In its mail survey the Commission sought information on the ethnic composition of participants in certain extracurricular activities, including student government, school newspaper, homecoming events, and cheerleading.

In the schools surveyed, the Commission found that, with only one exception, Mexican American students do not reach their proportionate rate of participation in any of the extracurricular activities studied. (See Table 4). This is true whether Chicano students constitute a majority or a minority of the enrollment.

When all students attending schools 50 percent or more Mexican American are taken as a group, Mexican Americans comprise 75 percent of the enrollment. However, as participants in extracurricular activities in these schools, they comprise from 50 to 73 percent of the participants depending on the activity, with the average rate of par-

⁵¹ Sheldon, Paul M., "Mexican Americans in Urban Public Schools: An Exploration of the Drop-out Problem", *California Journal of Educational Research*, Vol. XII, No. 1, January 1961, pp. 21-26.

Table 4. Participation in Extracurricular Activities in Secondary Schools By Ethnicity

	Schools having MA Student Enrollments of less than 50%		Schools having MA Student Enrollments greater than 50%	
	Anglos	Mexican American	Anglos	Mexican American
Percent of Total Student Enrollment*	72.8	17.4	19.2	74.5
Percent Participating as				
Student Body Presidents	79.2	8.6	34.3	65.7
Student Body Vice Presidents	79.0	10.5	35.3	61.8
Class Presidents	73.0	14.4	26.8	60.8
Newspaper Editors	76.3	15.2	35.5	60.0
Homecoming Queens	74.3	18.2	23.1	73.1
Homecoming Queen's Court	75.9	14.2	29.1	68.0
Cheerleaders	75.7	12.8	44.9	50.2
Average Percent Participating In The Above Seven Extracurricular Activities	76.2	13.4	32.7	62.8

* These figures represent the percent of all students enrolled in these types of schools who are of each of these two ethnic groups.

ticipation being 63 percent. By contrast, Anglo students comprise only 19 percent of the enrollment in these same schools, yet they make up from 23 to 45 percent of the participants in the extracurricular activities studied by the Commission.

In schools where Mexican Americans represent a minority of the enrollment (less than 50 percent), they are likewise underrepresented as participants in extracurricular activities. In these schools, Mexican Americans average 17 percent of the total enrollment, but average only 13 percent participation in those extracurricular activities studied by the Commission. In only one case, that of homecoming queen, Mexican American students are equitably represented. In the other six extracurricular activities studied, the representation ranged from 9 to 15 percent. Further, in these low Chicano density schools, the categories where the representation is the lowest are in those activities traditionally seen as having the greater prestige and influence, such as student body president and vice president. In these same schools, Anglo students represent 73 percent of the student population and average

76 percent participation, with the range being from 73 to 76 percent, depending on the activity.

VI. SUMMARY

The basic finding of this report is that minority students in the Southwest—Mexican Americans, blacks, American Indians—do not obtain the benefits of public education at a rate equal to that of their Anglo classmates. This is true regardless of the measure of school achievement used.

The Commission has sought to evaluate school achievement by reference to five standard measures: school holding power, reading achievement, grade repetitions, overageness, and participation in extracurricular activities.

Without exception, minority students achieve at a lower rate than Anglos: their school holding power is lower; their reading achievement is poorer; their repetition of grades is more frequent; their overageness is more prevalent; and they participate in extracurricular activities to a lesser degree than their Anglo counterparts.

School Holding Power

The proportion of minority students who remain in school through the 12th grade is significantly lower than that of Anglo students, with Mexican Americans demonstrating the most severe rate of attrition. The Commission estimates that out of every 100 Mexican American youngsters who enter first grade in the survey area, only 60 graduate from high school; only 67 of every 100 black first graders graduate from high school. In contrast, 86 of every 100 Anglos remain in school and receive high school diplomas.

For Mexican Americans, there are sharp differences in school holding power among the five States. Of the two States with the largest Mexican American school enrollment—California and Texas—holding power is significantly greater in California where an estimated 64 percent of the Mexican American youngsters in the districts surveyed graduate. Texas, by contrast, demonstrates the poorest overall record of any of the States in its ability to hold Mexican American students. By the end of the eighth grade, Chicanos in the survey area have already lost 14 percent of their peers—almost as many as Anglos will lose by the 12th grade. Before the end of the 12th grade, nearly half, or 47 percent, of the Mexican American pupils will have left school. In 1968, there were approximately 290,000 Mexican Americans enrolled in grades 1 through 6 in Texas public schools. If present holding power rates estimated by the Commission continue, 140,000 of these young people will never receive a high school diploma.

College entrance rates reveal an even greater gap between Anglos and minority group students. Nearly half the Anglo students who begin school continue on to college, but only about one of every four Chicano and black students do so.

Among the five Southwestern States, minority high school graduates have the greatest likelihood of entering college in California. There, 51 percent of black graduates in the districts surveyed go on to college as do 44 percent of Chicanos. In Colorado, New Mexico, and Texas, however, fewer than one out of every three Chicano high school graduates undertakes higher education.

Reading Achievement

Throughout the survey area, a disproportion-

ately large number of Chicanos and other minority youngsters lack reading skills commensurate with age and grade level expectations. At the fourth, eighth, and 12th grades the proportion of Mexican American and black students reading below grade level is generally twice as large as the proportion of Anglos reading below grade level. For the total Southwest survey area the percentage of minority students deficient in reading reaches as high as 63 and 70 percent in the 12th grade for Chicanos and blacks respectively. In the eighth grade the Chicano youngster is 2.3 times as likely as the Anglo to be reading below grade level while the black student is 2.1 times as likely.

Reading achievement becomes significantly lower for children of all ethnic groups as they advance in age and in grade level. For minority children, however, the drop is more severe than for Anglos. At the fourth grade, 51 percent of the Mexican Americans and 56 percent of the blacks, compared with 25 percent of the Anglos in the survey area, are reading below grade level. By the eighth grade, corresponding figures are 64 percent for Mexican Americans and 58 percent for blacks. Further deterioration occurs by the 12th grade despite the fact that many of the poorest achievers have already left school. At this stage, 63 percent of the Mexican Americans are reading below grade level as are 70 percent of the blacks and 34 percent of the Anglos.

The severity of reading retardation also increases the longer the Chicano and black youngsters remain in school. In the fourth grade, only 17 percent of the Mexican American and 21 percent of the black students are reading two or more years below grade level. By the 12th grade, however, two of every five Mexican American children and more than half the black students are at this low level of reading achievement.

Interstate comparisons reveal low achievement levels in reading for minority students in all States. In the California survey area 63 percent of the Chicanos at the 12th grade level are reading below grade level, while 59 percent of the black students at the same level are experiencing reading deficiencies. In Texas, two-thirds of all Mexican Americans and more than 70 percent of all black 12th graders fail to achieve grade level expectations in reading. By contrast, in

none of the five States does the percentage of Anglos reading below grade level reach such high proportions. In fact, in only one State, Arizona, does the Anglo proportion approach the high percentages of minorities reading below grade level.

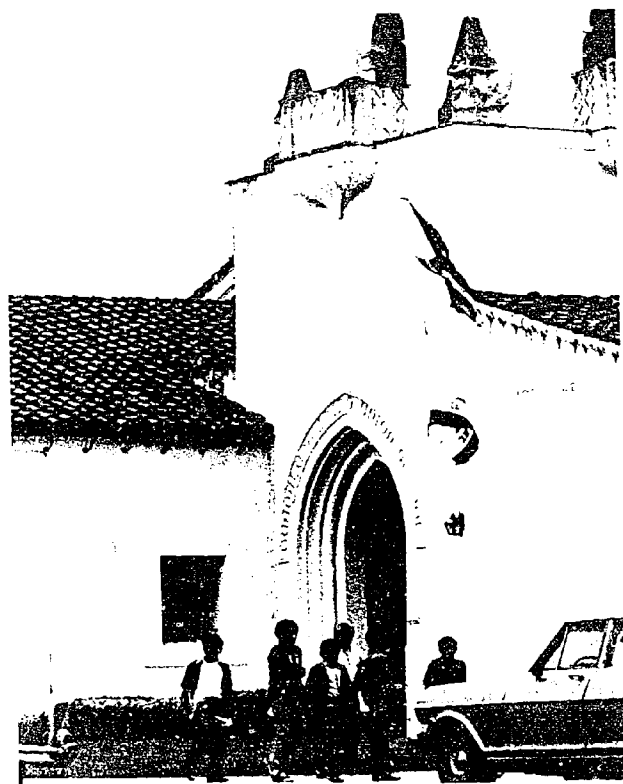
Grade Repetition

In the survey area, the Commission found that grade repetition rates for Mexican Americans are significantly higher than for Anglos. Some 16 percent of Mexican American students repeat the first grade as compared to 6 percent of the Anglos. Although the disparity between Mexican Americans and Anglos at the fourth grade is not as wide as in the first grade, Mexican American pupils are still twice as likely as Anglos to repeat this grade. The two States with the highest Mexican American pupil population, Texas and California, reveal significant differences in repetition rates. In the Texas schools surveyed, 22 percent of Chicano pupils are retained in first grade as compared to 10 percent in California.

The purpose of grade repetition is to increase the level of achievement for the retained student. In fact, the students' ultimate achievement level does not generally improve and, in addition, grade repetition predisposes the student to drop out before completion of high school.

Overageness

Another measure of achievement directly related to grade repetition is overageness for grade assignment. The Commission found that Mexican Americans in the survey area are as much as seven times as likely to be overage as their Anglo peers. The most significant difference appears in the eighth grade where more than 9 percent of the Mexican American pupils are overage as compared to a little more than 1 percent for the Anglo students. In the Southwest as a whole the degree of overageness increases for Anglos and blacks throughout the schooling process, but actually decreases for Chicanos between the eighth and 12th grades. The probable explanation for this phenomenon is that a very large percentage of overage Mexican American pupils leave school before graduation. The Commission estimated that at least 42 percent of overage Mexican American students in the eighth



grade do not continue in school through the 12th grade.

Again, comparing the two largest States, the difference is impressive. More than 16 percent of Chicano eighth graders are overage in Texas. In California only about 2 percent are overage.

Participation in Extracurricular Activities

Involvement in extracurricular activities makes the school experience more meaningful and tends to enhance school holding power. The Commission found, however, that Mexican American students are underrepresented in extracurricular activities. This is true whether Mexican Americans constitute a majority or a minority of the student enrollment in a school.

Thus, under all five measures of school achievement minority children are performing at significantly lower levels than Anglos. This report has sought only to present objective facts concerning the differences in school achievement between minority and majority group students, not to account for them. Nevertheless, the Commission believes these wide differences are matters of crucial concern to the Nation. The ultimate test of a school system's effectiveness is the performance of its students. Under that test, our schools are failing.

TABLE OF CONTENTS FOR APPENDICES

Appendix	Page
A Superintendents' Questionnaire	40
B Principals' Questionnaire	53
C Methodology Used to Estimate Holding Power	69
I. Elementary and Secondary Schools	69
II. Higher Education	76
D Selected Tables From Other Sources	82
1. Elementary and Secondary Enrollment, Southwest: Fall 1968	82
2. College Enrollment, Southwest: Fall 1968	83
3. Catholic School Enrollment, Southwest: Fall 1969	84
4. Public and Catholic School Enrollment, Southwest: Fall 1969	84
5. Persons of Spanish Origin, United States: November 1969	84
6. Educational Attainment, United States: November 1969	85
7. Family Income, United States: November 1969	85
E Findings of Related Studies on Achievement	88
F Reading Levels Tables	96
1-3. Reading Levels by School Ethnic Composition	96
4-6. Reading Levels by State	99



STAFF DIRECTOR

Appendix A

UNITED STATES COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20425

Dear Sir:

In accordance with its responsibilities as a factfinding agency in the field of civil rights, the United States Commission on Civil Rights is undertaking a study of the educational status of Mexican American youths in a random sampling of school districts in Arizona, California, Colorado, New Mexico, and Texas. In the course of this study, about 500 school districts and some schools within those districts are being surveyed. The study will provide a measure of the nature and extent of educational opportunities which Mexican American youths are receiving in public schools of the Southwest and will furnish, for the first time, extensive information on Mexican American education.

The attached questionnaires call for data which are or can be compiled in your central district office and school plants. If your records or those of your principals do not contain all the information requested, however, you may obtain figures from other available sources.

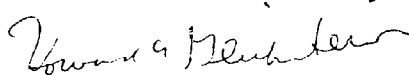
Please have the principals of the schools designated on the Principal Information Forms complete the appropriate questionnaire and return it to your office. In addition, we ask that you complete the Superintendent Information Form and forward it at the same time with the Principal Information Forms using the enclosed official envelope which requires no postage. Extra copies are enclosed for each respondent to use in completing the questionnaires and to keep for his records. All questionnaires should be returned by May 9, 1969.

It must be emphasized that criteria used in drawing a sample of schools and school districts were based on geographic representation and enrollment characteristics. In no case were complaints of any kind about discrimination a factor in selecting either schools or school districts.

If you have any questions, call collect or write to Henry M. Ramirez, Chief, Mexican American Studies Division, U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, Washington, D. C. 20425 (telephone: Area Code 202, 382-8941). Please indicate you are calling in reference to the questionnaire.

Thank you for your assistance in this most important study.

Sincerely yours,



Howard A. Glickstein
Acting Staff Director

Enclosures

MEXICAN AMERICAN EDUCATION STUDY
Superintendent Information Form

General Instructions

- A. The person completing this questionnaire should be the superintendent or his official delegate.
- B. Answers to each question should be given as of March 31, 1969 unless some other time period is requested. If information is not available for March 31, 1969, give it for the time closest to, or encompassing, that date. Pupil membership and personnel data may be given on this questionnaire as they were reported on the Title VI Compliance Forms (Forms OS/CR 101 and 102, Fall 1968 Elementary and Secondary School Survey, required under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, due October 15, 1968). If a date other than March 31, 1969 or a time period other than that requested is used, please indicate which date or time period is used in the space provided or in the left hand margin next to the question.
- C. Use additional pages where necessary.
- D. **INSTRUCTIONS FOR DETERMINING ETHNIC AND RACIAL GROUPINGS:** Wherever ethnic and racial data are requested, it is suggested that visual means be used to make such identification. Individuals should not be questioned or singled out in any way about their racial or ethnic lineage. For purposes of this questionnaire, please use the following classifications:
- i. **SPANISH SURNAMED AMERICAN:** Persons considered in school or community to be of Mexican, Central American, Cuban Puerto Rican, Latin American, or other Spanish-speaking origin. This group is often referred to as Mexican American, Spanish American, or Latin American; local usage varies greatly. In this questionnaire, the terms "Mexican American" and "Spanish Surnamed American" are used interchangeably.
 - ii. **NEGRO:** Persons considered in school or community to be of Negroid or black African origin.
 - iii. **ANGLO:** White persons not usually considered in school or community to be members of any of the above ethnic or racial categories.
 - iv. **OTHER:** Persons considered as "non-Anglo" and who are not classifiable as Spanish Surnamed American or Negro. Include as "Other" such persons as Orientals or American Indians.
- E. If a question is not applicable, if information is not available, or if you must estimate, please use the common, standard abbreviations printed on the bottom of each page.

OFFICIAL DISTRICT NAME _____

DISTRICT MAILING ADDRESS _____
_____ Street Address or P.O. Box Number

_____ Town _____ County _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

TELEPHONE NUMBER _____
_____ Area Code _____ Number

NAME OF SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS _____

SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____

NAME AND TITLE OF PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR FILLING OUT THIS QUESTIONNAIRE IF OTHER THAN SUPERINTENDENT _____

SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____

LEGEND: Unknown—UN; Estimate—EST.; Not Applicable—NA.; Not Available—?; None—0

- [illegible]

LEGEND: Unknown-UNK.; Estimate-EST.; Not Applicable-NA.; Not Available-?; None-0

Questions 2 and 3 instructions: If there is only one secondary school in this district, do not answer questions 2 and 3. Proceed to question 4.

2. A. Name the secondary school in this district which had the highest percentage of its 1968 graduates enter two or four year colleges. FOR USCCR USE ONLY
- B. What percent of that school's 1968 graduates entered two or four year colleges? _____ %
- C. What percent of that school's 1968 Spanish Surnamed graduates entered two or four year colleges? _____ %
3. Name the secondary school in this district which has had the highest dropout rate so far this year. FOR USCCR USE ONLY

Question 4 instructions: If there is only one elementary school in this district, do not answer question 4. Proceed to question 5.

4. Name the elementary school in this district whose pupils had the highest average reading achievement test scores in the 1967-1968 school year. FOR USCCR USE ONLY
5. If since June 1968 this district has conducted, sponsored or paid for any in-service teacher training for any course in column (i), enter the appropriate data about that training in columns (ii) through (v). If this district has not conducted, sponsored or paid for any such training since June 1968, check here ☐ and proceed to Question 6.

(i)		(ii)	(iii)	(iv)	(v)
Course		Total number of hours this course met, per teacher – summer 1968	Total number of hours this course met, per teacher – academic year 1968-1969	Number of teachers in in-service training in summer 1968	Number of teachers in in-service training in academic year 1968-1969
A.	English as a second language for the Spanish speaking (instruction in English for those who know little or no English)				
B.	Bilingual education (instruction in both Spanish and English so that the mother tongue is strengthened concurrent with the pupil learning a second language)				
C.	Mexican or Spanish history or culture				
D.	Mexican American, Spanish American, or Hispanic history or culture				
E.	Remedial reading				
F.	Other subjects relative to Mexican Americans: (Specify.) _____ _____ _____				

LEGEND: Unknown—UNK.; Estimate—EST.; Not Applicable—NA.; Not Available—?; None—0

6. List the professional personnel for this district as of March 31, 1969, by ethnic and by educational background. Give data about these individuals in as many (vertical) columns as requested. Do not assign any individual to more than one (horizontal) row. Although it is recognized that a person's activities may fall under more than one category, each person should be assigned in accordance with his major activity. Exclude personnel assigned to schools.	ETHNIC GROUP				EDUCATION		
	(i) Number Spanish Surnamed American	(ii) Number Negro	(iii) Number Anglo	(iv) Number Other	(v) Number with Bachelor's Degree only	(vi) Number with Master's Degree, but not Doctor's Degree	(vii) Number with Doctor's Degree
A. Superintendent of schools (or acting)							
B. Associate Superintendents of schools							
C. Assistant superintendents of schools							
D. Psychologists or psychometrists							
E. Social workers							
F. Attendance officers							
G. Federal programs directors							
H. Curriculum directors							
I. Community relations specialists							
J. All others not assigned to schools							

7. Using one line for each Board of Trustees member, list the principal occupation of each by code number. Refer to the list below for code. If you cannot ascertain which code is appropriate for a given Board Member, specify his occupation. Indicate ethnic group, the number of years each has served on the Board, and years of education.

Occupation if code number is not known	(i) Occupation code number	(ii) Spanish Surnamed American	(iii) Negro	(iv) Anglo	(v) Other	(vi) Number of years served on Board	(vii) Number of years of school completed or highest degree attained
1.							
2.							
3.							
4.							
5.							
6.							
7.							
8.							
9.							
10.							
11.							

1. Business owners, officials and managers
2. Professional and technical services
3. Farmers
4. Sales and clerical
5. Skilled craftsmen, other skilled workers and foremen

6. Semi-skilled operators and unskilled workers
7. Service workers
8. Housewives
9. Retired

8. Has this district employed consultants on Mexican American educational affairs or problems this school year? (Check one only.)

- A. ☐ No
- B. ☐ Yes, for a total of one day only
- C. ☐ Yes, for a total of two to four days
- D. ☐ Yes, for a total of five to seven days
- E. ☐ Yes, for a total of eight to ten days
- F. ☐ Yes, for a total of more than ten days

LEGEND: Unknown—UNK.; Estimate—EST.; Not Applicable—NA.; Not Available—?; None—0

9. Has this district appointed, elected or recognized a district-wide volunteer advisory board (or committee) on Mexican American educational affairs or problems, which has held meetings this school year? (Check one only.)

- A. ☐ No
 B. ☐ Yes, it has met only once this year.
 C. ☐ Yes, it has met for a total of two to five times this year.
 D. ☐ Yes, it has met for a total of six to fifteen times this year.
 E. ☐ Yes, it has met for a total of more than fifteen times this year.

10. If you answered "Yes" to question 9, what actions, programs or policies has the committee recommended during the 1968-1969 school year? (Check all which apply.)

- A. ☐ Ethnic balance in schools
 B. ☐ In-service teacher training in Mexican American history or culture, or in bilingual education, or in English as a second language
 C. ☐ Employment of Spanish Surnamed teachers or administrators
 D. ☐ Pupil exchange programs with other districts or schools
 E. ☐ Expanded PTA activities relative to Mexican Americans
 F. ☐ Changes in curriculum to make it more relevant for Mexican Americans
 G. ☐ Bilingual-bicultural organization in a school or the school system
 H. ☐ Other (Specify.) _____

11. Does this district have a written school board policy discouraging the use of Spanish by Mexican American pupils:

- A. On the school grounds? Yes ☐1 No ☐2
 B. In the classroom (except Spanish classes)? Yes ☐1 No ☐2

If you answered "Yes" to A or B above (question 11), please attach a copy of that policy and give us the date it was made effective.

FOR USCCR USE ONLY

12. As of March 31, 1969, what was the total school district membership, by ethnic group, in the following grades:

	(i)	(ii)	(iii)	(iv)	(v)
	Number Spanish Surnamed American	Number Negro	Number Anglo	Number Other	Total Number
A. First Grade					
B. Fourth Grade					
C. Eighth Grade					
D. Twelfth Grade					

13. Use the following space and additional pages, if necessary, to give us further comments relative to this questionnaire.

52 LEGEND: Unknown--UNK.; Estimate--EST.; Not Applicable--NA.; Not Available--?; None--0

Appendix B



UNITED STATES COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20425

STAFF DIRECTOR

Dear Sir:

In accordance with its responsibilities as a factfinding agency in the field of civil rights, the United States Commission on Civil Rights is undertaking a study of the educational status of Mexican American youths in a random sampling of school districts in Arizona, California, Colorado, New Mexico, and Texas. In the course of this study, about 500 school districts and some schools within those districts are being surveyed. The study will provide a measure of the nature and extent of educational opportunities which Mexican American youths are receiving in public schools of the Southwest and will furnish, for the first time, extensive information on Mexican American education.

The attached questionnaires call for data which are or can be compiled in your central district office and school plants. If your records or those of your principals do not contain all the information requested, however, you may obtain figures from other available sources.

Please have the principals of the schools designated on the Principal Information Forms complete the appropriate questionnaire and return it to your office. In addition, we ask that you complete the Superintendent Information Form and forward it at the same time with the Principal Information Forms using the enclosed official envelope which requires no postage. Extra copies are enclosed for each respondent to use in completing the questionnaires and to keep for his records. All questionnaires should be returned by May 9, 1969.

It must be emphasized that criteria used in drawing a sample of schools and school districts were based on geographic representation and enrollment characteristics. In no case were complaints of any kind about discrimination a factor in selecting either schools or school districts.

If you have any questions, call collect or write to Henry M. Ramirez, Chief, Mexican American Studies Division, U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, Washington, D. C. 20425 (telephone: Area Code 202, 382-8941). Please indicate you are calling in reference to the questionnaire.

Thank you for your assistance in this most important study.

Sincerely yours,

Howard A. Glickstein
Acting Staff Director

Enclosures

53/55

MEXICAN AMERICAN EDUCATION STUDY

School Principal Information Form

General Instructions:

- A. The person completing this questionnaire should be the school principal or his official delegate.
- B. Answers to each question should be given as of March 31, 1969 unless some other time period is requested. If information is not available for March 31, 1969, give it for the time closest to, or encompassing, that date. Pupil membership and personnel data may be given on this questionnaire as they were reported on the Title VI Compliance Forms (Forms OS/CR 101 and 102, Fall 1968 Elementary and Secondary School Survey, required under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, due October 15, 1968). If a date other than March 31, 1969 or a time period other than that requested is used, please indicate which date or time period is used in the space provided or in the left hand margin next to the question.
- C. Use additional pages where necessary.
- D. Instructions for determining ethnic and racial groupings: Wherever ethnic and racial data is requested, it is suggested that visual means be used to make such identification. Individuals should not be questioned or singled out in any way about their racial or ethnic lineage. For purposes of this questionnaire, please use the following classifications:
- i. **SPANISH SURNAMED AMERICAN:** Persons considered in school or community to be of Mexican, Central American, Cuban, Puerto Rican, Latin American or Spanish-speaking origin. This group is often referred to as Mexican, Spanish American, or Latin American; local usage varies greatly. For the purposes in this questionnaire the terms "Mexican American" and "Spanish Surnamed American" are used interchangeably.
 - ii. **NEGRO:** Persons considered in school or community to be of Negroid or black African origin.
 - iii. **ANGLO:** White persons not usually considered in school or community to be members of any of the above ethnic or racial categories.
 - iv. **OTHER:** Persons considered "non-Anglo" and who are not classifiable as Spanish Surnamed American or Negro. Include as "Other" such persons as Orientals or American Indians.
- E. If a question is not applicable, if information is not available, or if you must estimate, please use the common, standard abbreviations printed on the bottom of each page.
- F. After completing all items in this questionnaire, please return the questionnaire in accordance with your superintendent's instructions.

SCHOOL NAME _____

MAILING ADDRESS _____

Street Address or P.O. Box No.

Town

County

State

Zip Code

TELEPHONE NUMBER _____

Area Code

Number

NAME OF SCHOOL DISTRICT _____

NAME OF PRINCIPAL _____

SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____

NAME AND TITLE OF PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR FILLING OUT QUESTIONNAIRE IF OTHER THAN THE PRINCIPAL _____

SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____

LEGEND: Unknown--UNK.; Estimate--EST.; Not Applicable--NA.; Not Available--?; None--0

MEXICAN AMERICAN EDUCATION STUDY

School Principal Information Form

1. If this school has received ESEA, Title I funds during the current (1968-1969) school year, check here. ☐

2. Is this school: (Check no more than one.)

- A. ☐ A social adjustment school primarily for children who have disciplinary problems?
- B. ☐ Primarily for the physically handicapped?
- C. ☐ Primarily for the mentally retarded?
- D. ☐ Primarily for the emotionally disturbed?
- E. ☐ (California only). A continuation school?
- F. ☐ Organized primarily as some combination of A, B, C, D, or E? (Specify.) _____

If you checked any of the above (A, B, C, D, E, or F in question 2), do not answer any further questions; return this questionnaire in accordance with your superintendent's instructions.

3. What was the average daily attendance for this school in the month of October 1968 or, if not available for that month, for the time period nearest to or including October 1968? (Round answer to nearest whole number.) _____
Time period if not October 1968 _____

Question 3 instructions: Average Daily Attendance is the aggregate of the attendance for each of the days during the stated reporting period divided by the number of days school was actually in session during that period. Only days on which pupils are under the guidance and direction of teachers should be considered as days in session.

4. Which best describes the locality (incorporated or unincorporated) of this school? (Check one only.)

- A. ☐ Under 5,000 inhabitants
- B. ☐ 5,000 to 49,999 inhabitants
- C. ☐ 50,000 to 250,000 inhabitants
- D. ☐ Over 250,000 inhabitants

5. Which best describes the attendance area of this school (the area from which the majority of pupils come)? (Check one only.)

- A. ☐ A rural area
- B. ☐ A suburb
- C. ☐ A town or a city

6. How many square feet of outdoor play area (including athletic area) does this school have? (Round answer to the nearest thousand square feet.) _____

7. Is (are) any grade(s) in this school (excluding kindergarten) on double sessions? Yes ☐ 1 No ☐ 2

LEGEND: Unknown—UNK.; Estimate—EST.; Not Applicable—NA.; Available—?; None—0

8. List full-time staff by ethnic group and professional background as of March 31, 1969 unless data are unavailable for that date. In that case follow General Instructions, item 8, page 2.

Reporting date if not March 31, 1969 _____

DO NOT assign any individual to more than one horizontal row; assign each in accordance with his major activity. Assign individuals to as many columns as are applicable.

NOTE: Columns (ii) through (v) should total column (i).

	Ethnic Group					Education			Experience	
	(i)	(ii)	(iii)	(iv)	(v)	(vi)	(vii)	(viii)	(ix)	(x)
	Total Number	Number Spanish Surnamed American	Number Negro	Number Anglo	Number Other	Number with Bachelor's degree only	Number with Master's but not Doctor's degree	Number with Doctor's degree	Number with under five years experience as an educator	Number with more than five years experience as an educator
A. Full-time professional nonteaching staff:										
(1) Principal										
(2) Vice (assistant) principals										
(3) Counselors										
(4) Librarians										
(5) Other full-time professional nonteaching staff										
B. Full-time professional instructional staff (teachers)										
C. Secretaries, stenographers, bookkeepers and other clerical staff										
D. Custodians, gardeners, and other maintenance staff										
E. Full-time teacher aids (in classrooms)										

9. How many people are employed part-time in the following capacities in this school?	(i)	(ii)
	Number of people	Full-time equivalence
A. Professional nonteaching staff		
B. Professional instructional staff (teachers)		

Question 9 instructions: Full-time equivalence is the amount of employed time required in a part-time position expressed in proportion to that required in a full-time position, with "1" representing one full-time position. (Round F.T.E. answers to the nearest whole number.)

10. What is the principal's annual salary? (Round answer to the nearest hundred dollars.) \$ _____

11. For how many years has the present principal been principal of this school? _____

12. Indicate for approximately how many months the principal is regularly at work in the school plant. (Check the alternative which is most accurate.)

- A. ☐ Eleven months or more, full-time
 B. ☐ Ten months, full-time
 C. ☐ Nine months, full-time
 D. ☐ Eight months or fewer, full-time
 E. ☐ Part-time (Explain) _____